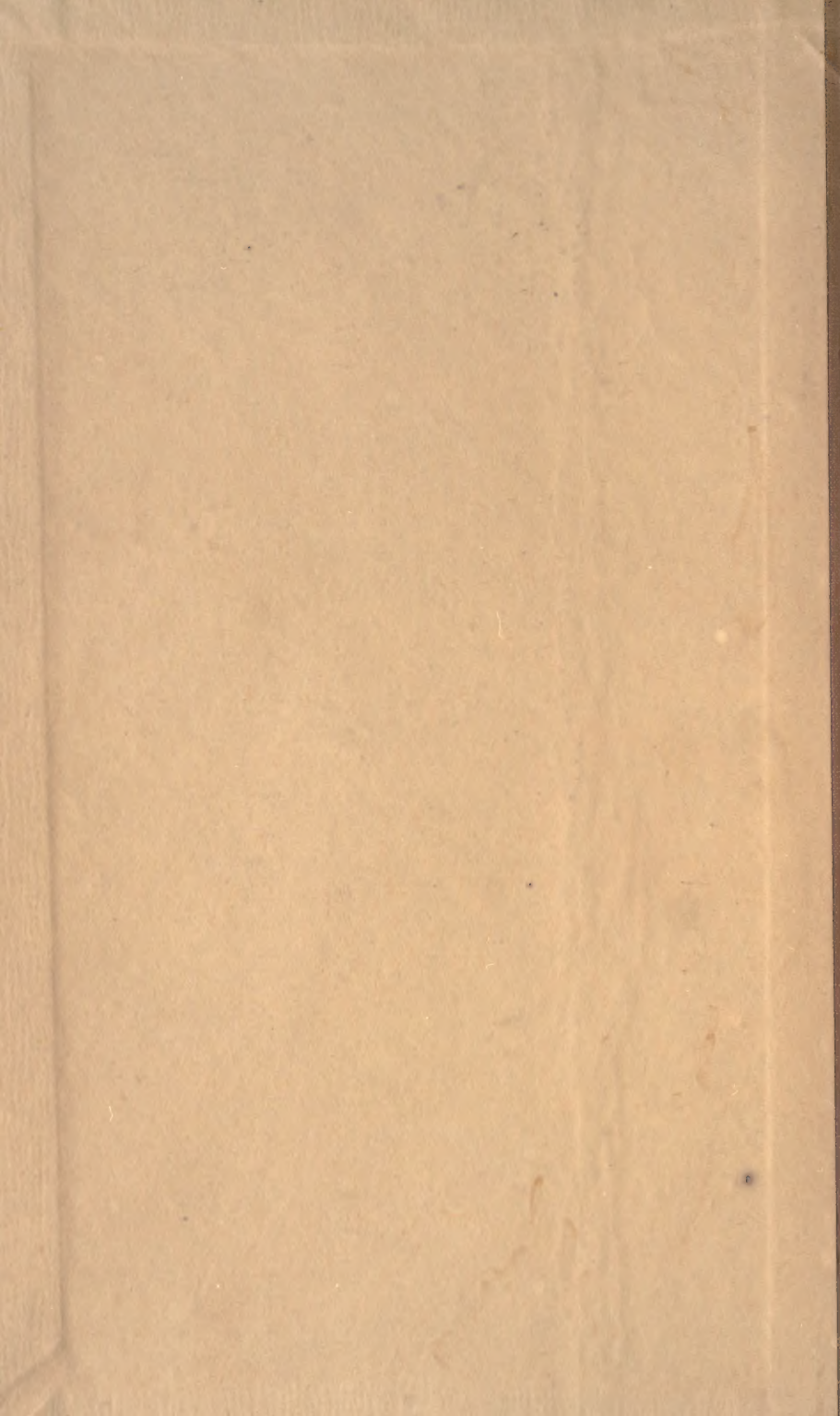





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# THE FAMILY

BY

HELEN BOSANQUET



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## PREFACE

THE intention of this book is to bring together the materials for an estimate of the meaning and importance of the Family as an institution in human society. In order to understand its structure and influence as we now know it, and to judge whether it is an essential or merely temporary form of organisation, it seemed to be necessary to understand also something of its development and function in the past. Hence the first part consists of an attempt to explain some of the leading theories and facts of the history of the past, and to show their bearing upon the modern Family; while the second part is devoted to an analysis and description of this modern Family, and a consideration of its influence in social life. It is quite remarkable how seldom the present student or reformer of society shows any recognition of the importance of the Family as compared with other and more artificial institutions. Indeed, the very word institution means in popular usage an asylum or a hospital or a reformatory; something with plenty of bricks and mortar and a large staff of officials. If we find a reference in a newspaper to some "excellent institution," it may prove to be an orphanage or a



soup-kitchen; it certainly will not be a Family. An institution which needs no subscription list for its support, no committee for its management, which is both self-contained and self-propagating, seems so independent of our conscious efforts that we are apt to forget how large a part of human life is devoted to its maintenance, and how large a part of human life depends upon it for physical and moral existence. From time to time, it is true, statesmen and economists have recognised its deep significance for political and social movements; and I offer the book partly from this point of view, but partly also as a tribute to a most "excellent institution."

HELEN BOSANQUET.

OXSHOTT, 4th September 1906.



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PART I  
THE FAMILY HISTORY





## INTRODUCTORY

WHAT is a Family, and what is its purpose? No one will feel himself at a loss in answering the question; man, woman, and child, the "practical syllogism," two premisses and their conclusion, these in their combination form the Family, and the purpose of the combination is the mutual convenience and protection of all the members belonging to it.

This is the Family as we know it and see it amongst us, without pausing to reflect upon it. Nevertheless in its past history, its present significance, and its importance for the future, it involves a whole heaven and earth beside.

Even as we conceive it in this simplest form there is ambiguity and doubt involved. Must the union which constitutes a Family be permanent and exclusive in its nature, or may the individual members under given conditions break away and form fresh families with other individuals? It is a question which the law of the land decides one way, but which the Church would fain decide the other. Is the relation between parents and children one of mutual responsibility, or is it binding upon one side alone? There have been times when the rights of parents

and the duties of children were almost exclusively predominant; but to-day more would be found to emphasise the rights of children and duties of parents, while not a few treat the relationship of duty or responsibility between parents and children at all as obsolete.

But apart from these ambiguities, in our simplest conception of the Family, we find it susceptible of the widest divergences of interpretation. In extent it has varied, and still varies, from signifying just one pair and their offspring to including all the generations which have sprung from any one known or reputed ancestor. In practice almost any degree between these two extremes may be found as constituting the accepted Family. It is a matter of very differing custom, even in different parts of the same country, how nearly related a cousin must be in order to be accounted of the same Family; while probably as individuals we should assume a different attitude according as his claim was to be entered on the pedigree, or admitted into the family circle. And how largely this question of the extent of the family relationship is one of human convention we learn still more emphatically from history, when we find that there have been times when only those descending through males were accounted of the Family, while yet again there have been other times when only those descending from the females were recognised.

The purpose of the Family, as conceived by those



who have reflected upon it, has varied even more than its extent. Some find in it mainly an institution for the care of the children, whose state of helplessness is prolonged so far beyond that of the offspring of other animals; and there has probably never been a time, when in a greater or less degree, and more or less consciously, the Family has not achieved this object.<sup>1</sup> Others, again, say that its original purpose was for the sake of the parents and ancestors, that their cult might be preserved; and there have certainly been long periods of time amongst great peoples when this motive seems to have been the predominant one. Others, again, maintain that it had its origin in private property and was organised for purposes of inheritance; while others yet again find in it only a device whereby the man is enabled to turn the labour of wife and child to his own account. To some it is the expression of a religion, indeed one of the most primitive and ultimate of all religions; to others a merely material phenomenon, explicable entirely on economic grounds. The origin of justice, the source of law, the fountain of morality, the necessary prelude to the State, the most formidable rival to the State, a merely passing phase in the development of civilisation, an essential condition in all stages of human progress; all these the Family has been held to be, and for nearly all views some justification may be found in past or present.

It does not, of course, follow that these aspects

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that this proposition has been disputed, but see p. 36.

and objects of the Family were consciously present in the minds of the individuals who found themselves grouped in families. Many of the great processes of social life develop themselves through generations of unconscious instruments ; individuals, that is, who are of course keenly conscious of their own lives and purposes, but realise only partially, or not at all, how these form part in some far wider scheme. It is only when reflection comes, and when the advance of history and science enables man to take wider views backwards and forwards along the stream of human life, that he begins to be aware of the wider purposes which include his own, and to accept them consciously as his.

Towards this widening of our outlook what fact can have contributed more potently than the fact of the Family itself in its binding together of the generations ? It was interest in what *our* fathers have done in this world which gave the first impulse to history ; it was wonder as to what they were doing after they were lost to this world which was the root of religious speculation ; and it is the thought of *our* children's lives which has always been the strongest link with the future which is so mysteriously hidden from ourselves.

It is true that when we try to read the development of the Family in this way we find ourselves moving with much uncertainty and even bewilderment. We find ourselves driven to realise that the Family as we know it most intimately is only one

stage in a long process of change, and that to argue from its present constitution to what it has been in its past or will be in its future is full of danger. It is true, of course, that its present form is the outcome and contains the essential spirit of all that has gone before; and equally true that if it has a future, if the present is not, as some say, a final stage of decay, then that future also must in germ be there. But in order to interpret the facts before us, we need much more material in the way of studied observation and history than is available.

It is mainly in recent years that the Family as an institution has attracted the attention of the thinker and historian. It is so intimate a part of life, so inseparable from existence in all normal communities, that, like the air we breathe, it eludes observation, and we only notice it when something goes wrong. And so it happens that far less is known about it than about analogous institutions such as states, and churches, and cities. But without some attempt to realise the past development, if only in its broader outlines, it will be impossible to appreciate even the present significance of the Family in all its fulness. As we get glimpse after glimpse of first one aspect and then another predominating in the past, our conception of it gains in richness and completeness, and we first begin to realise the importance of the part it has played in the history of humanity. But so far much of our reading of the past is little more than a very tentative construction out of materials which are hard to collect and still harder to interpret. There is a large

and growing literature gathering round the subject, but it can hardly be said that there is as yet any generally accepted doctrine of the history of the Family. At best our investigators can point to the certainty that certain phases have existed in its development, and to the probability that these phases have succeeded each other in a certain order; and on both points much difference of opinion exists. In the summary I shall attempt to give of the results so far attained, I shall mainly follow the line taken by Professor Howard in his admirable work on *Matrimonial Institutions*.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

THERE is one class of men who from time to time have taken a keen and practical interest in the constitution of the Family, and they are the Statesmen. They have realised how intimately the welfare of the State depends upon the influence and nature of the Families from which it is constituted; and they have endeavoured that the State in turn should mould and influence the Family to its own purposes. Hence it comes about that the first and most obvious material which presented itself for the study of the Family was found in ancient law. Law of course did not make, any more than it can destroy, the Family; but in law we have the systematic exposition of those customs which the rulers of a people desire to perpetuate or enforce; and the code of laws of a people represents its recognised way of life as distinct from its caprices and aberrations. Great stress has been laid, especially in the earlier stages of inquiry, upon the information to be obtained about the organisation of the Family amongst the Greeks and Romans and Hindoos, from what remains to us of the laws of these

peoples; and there is no doubt that we can construct from them a very vivid picture of what the Family was at certain stages of its development. But it would be a mistake to assume that these laws, however primitive themselves, necessarily record primitive institutions. Laws are the outcome of a considerably advanced state of social development, and represent a society and institutions which may be far removed from their original simplicity. All that can fairly be said is, that the Family as represented in ancient law is the first of which we have documentary evidence; and the first therefore which we can realise to ourselves with definiteness and certainty.

The particular form of the Family which early investigators, basing their inquiries upon ancient law, assumed to be original and primitive, is that known as the Patriarchal Family; and from it they derived, not only later developments of the Family itself, but also the organisation of the State, and the power of kings. It is a form which it is easy for us to understand, because in its essential idea it is one with our own. That essential idea is, the supremacy of the Father in the Family; and our modern institution differs mainly from the typical patriarchal Family in the greater or less degree in which that power is limited. The limitations are imposed partly by law and partly by custom; and differ very greatly between different peoples even of the present day. A man's power may be absolute over his own children, but limited to one generation, or even to

the earlier years of that generation ; or, again, it may extend to his children's children, and so to all descendants during his lifetime. Or, indeed, if we take into consideration the facts of ancestor-worship as still practised amongst some peoples, it is clear that to a large extent his power continues even after death over the generations of the living. We shall have occasion to consider these and other modifications in detail, further on ; meanwhile we may note in passing some of the more important points in which the power of the father has gradually been limited in the development of the modern Family :—

1. The freedom of the sons to start independent households during the lifetime of the father.

2. The freedom of the children to acquire independent property.

3. The freedom of the children to order their own lives on attaining majority.

4. The freedom of the children to marry as they choose.

5. The right of children under age to protection from the State against the father.

In one respect only has the power of the father been increased, and that is in his relation to the Family property, and his greater freedom of bequest. (See Chapter xi.)

The typical Patriarchal Family, which Sir Henry Maine and other writers have taken to represent in its structure the primitive form, is the Roman Family



in the days when the *Patria Potestas*, the power of the father, was at its strongest. It consisted of the Head of the Family or *Pater*, and all descendants in the male line (including adopted sons and their descendants), and slaves. Over these his power was absolute . . . "the parent, when our information commences, has over his children the *jus vitæ necisque*, the power of life and death, and *à fortiori* of uncontrolled corporal chastisement; he can modify their personal condition at pleasure; he can give a wife to his son; he can give his daughter in marriage; he can divorce his children of either sex; he can transfer them to another family by adoption, and he can sell them" (Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 138). Even the eldest son who was to succeed to his authority had no rights apart from him so long as he lived; he was always in subjection, and might not even start a separate home. Though married and himself the father of children he still remained a minor, subject to the complete control of his father.

Though the Patriarchal Family is large in the sense of including all living generations, it is limited in the case before us by the fact that it included within its kinship only descendants through males. A woman when she married passed out of her original family into that of her husband and became subject to the power ruling therein; a fact represented to the present day by a woman's assuming her husband's name on marriage. But with us the change of name involves no change of

kinship; and we distinguish carefully between blood relations and "connections by marriage."<sup>1</sup> In the Roman family a woman's children were not considered to be related to her brother's children. This particular system of relationship through males only, which is known as agnation, is not the essential feature of the Patriarchal Family, though found in connection with its most extreme form. It is parallel to the system of relationship through females only which we shall notice later on, and which again does not necessarily involve the rule of the mother, though it is sometimes found in connection with a matriarchate.

The essential characteristic of the Patriarchal Family is the permanent power of the Father over the adult male members of his Family; and the source of this power, the reason which enabled him to maintain it, has given rise to much interesting speculation and research. It is easy to attribute the authority of the father over wife and child to the superior strength of the man, so long as the children remain young and weak; but when we find the authority still attaching to a decrepit old man whose sons and grandsons are in the prime of life, and when his power over his wife continues to an advanced stage of civilisation after the sway of brute force has yielded to the supremacy of intellect and spirit, it is clear that some deeper foundation than that of physical strength is requisite.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the old rhyme—

"My son's my son till he gets him a wife,  
My daughter's my daughter all her life."

Again it may be urged that as progenitor the Father is also possessor of his children, and that his power was derived from the rights of a proprietor over his property. No doubt children were regarded almost as property; but the same power extended over his wife and children by adoption, who could not be regarded as property for the same reason. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the Roman term *Pater* signified much more the lord or ruler than the father in our modern sense; and that it might even happen that a man without children would be Head of the Family or *Paterfamilias*, with unlimited authority over all members of it. In fact, the one essential feature of the *Paterfamilias* was that he should not be within the *Potestas* of another man.<sup>1</sup>

Another reason adduced for the authority of the Head of the Family is the superior wisdom and accumulated experience of the oldest member, who is thereby constituted the most capable of conducting its affairs and ruling its members. Probably this cause counted for much more in the days when wisdom and experience and even knowledge were literally matters of private property, which could only be passed on orally, as it were by private gift, from one generation to another. But as there gradually came to be a generalised stock of knowledge, made common property by means of organised teaching and books, upon which every one could draw who chose, the importance of the old people

<sup>1</sup> Fustel de Coulanges : *La Cité Antique*, p. 97.



as the only source of wisdom would naturally tend to diminish. Le Play, writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, notes this as one reason why Russia was still peculiarly adapted to the patriarchal régime “. . . in a society where school education contributes nothing to the precocious development of the young, where knowledge is acquired only from actual living and from social relations, the old men have in fact an enormous superiority over the young people. These are conscious of their inferiority, and when in Russia one makes some inquiry from a man of forty he never fails to answer that such information can only be properly given by an older man.”<sup>1</sup> He notes instances of communities which have offered active resistance to the education of the young, solely on the ground that it would weaken the authority of the old. Even in England at the present day we are all familiar with the opponents of our systems of elementary education, who maintain that it is responsible for a growing disrespect amongst the children, and an increasing impatience of parental authority ; and it can hardly be denied that there is some truth in the criticism.

But there is one kind of knowledge which never becomes public property, because there is not (except in very special cases) any public interest attaching to it. This is the knowledge of family history and tradition ; and just in proportion as family tradition is held to be of importance, the Head of the Family

<sup>1</sup> *Les Ouvriers Européens*, vol. ii. p. 66.



retains the peculiar dignity which attaches to him as the main storehouse of tradition and personal recollection. Amongst people whose main or sole religion is ancestor-worship this dignity and authority are reinforced by the whole weight of religious sanction, and it is to the fact of ancestor-worship that scholars now attribute the absolute power possessed by the Pater in the typical Patriarchal Family. He alone knew the traditional cult by which the departed ancestors were to be worshipped and appeased, and he alone could pass it on to his eldest son, and so ensure the continued prosperity of the Family. Thus any member of the Family who should cut himself loose from the authority of the Pater, not only debarred himself from the protection and favour of the ancestral gods during life, but condemned himself to misery in the world of spirits, where he would be excluded from the family cult.<sup>1</sup>

There is such a deep significance in the fact that the worship of ancestors and of the domestic hearth preceded that of all other gods of the classical mythology, and that even after these had appeared upon the scene, the prayer to the hearth preceded that to any other divinity, that I will give here a brief account (taken from *La Cité Antique*) of the religion upon which the Patriarchal Family of the Aryans was founded.

The basis of this religion was the belief in immortality. The spirits of the dead lived again, a

<sup>1</sup> Compare the modern superstition that the souls of unchristened children can find no resting place after death.

shadowy life beneath the earth, whence they exercised power for good or for evil upon the fortunes of those who continued to represent the Family upon the earth. And upon the living members of the Family, strictly speaking upon the Head of the Family, they depended not only for actual food and drink, but also for the cult which ensured their blessedness. They were gods indeed, but only so long as the worship due to gods was offered them; failing that, they left their burial place and became wandering spirits to torment the living.

This worship, so essential to living and to dead, could be offered only by the direct descendants of the dead, because they alone knew the necessary ritual. Every family had its own peculiar cult, to which no stranger was ever admitted, and which alone could appease and satisfy the gods of that family. The cult was handed from father to son, from generation to generation, and could not be lost without condemning the whole series of ancestors to eternal misery. Hence it became a matter of sacred duty to ensure the continuance of the family. Celibacy was "both an impiety and a misfortune"; involving a "kind of damnation," both for the offender and his ancestors. At Athens the law charged the first magistrate of the city with the duty of watching lest any family should be in danger of extinction; and it was the custom in Greece, when the citizens were called out to war, to assign the posts of danger to married men who already had sons to carry on the family. "Une

*famille qui s'éteint, c'est un culte qui meurt."* For those who remained childless (that is without sons, since daughters were useless in this respect) the expedient remained of adoption, whereby a stranger was solemnly initiated into the religion of the Family. By this he was constituted in its most important sense the son of the Family, and the heir to its responsibilities. So closely indeed is the idea of the Family connected with that of the ancestral worship, that classical authors are found to maintain that relationship actually consists in sharing the same cult. It was for this reason that kinship was counted in the male line alone amongst the Romans; no person could partake in two cults, a woman when she married abandoned the cult of her own family and entered into that of her husband, hence she and her children ceased to be related to the family from which she sprang. Hence also, in all probability, the comparatively slight estimation in which, even to this day, the daughters of a family are apt to be held.

This family worship (long forgotten precursor of our modern family prayers) was always offered to the ancestors at the domestic hearth, which was at once the centre of the home life and the sacred place of religion. Round the hearth all members of the Family assembled for the rites of worship, and nothing alien nor unclean was admitted into the sacred precinct.

This sacredness of the hearth, and the necessity of preserving its purity, became also the source of



morality. It demanded from all who approached it chastity, purity from blood-guiltiness, faithfulness in married life. Those who offended against its laws must expiate the offence before being readmitted to its service. In our expression "filial piety" we still preserve a record of the time when religion and the due observance of family morality were one thing, when piety consisted in the exercise of the domestic virtues. "All was divine within the family"; love of home was a virtue, because in the home alone man found his God, and he loved his house as to-day he loves his church.

The Hindoo prayer to the hearth is beautifully expressive of this aspect of the Family as the strength and preserver of righteous living: "Thou restorest to the right way the man who has gone astray in the wrong. . . . If we have committed a fault, if we have walked far from thee, pardon us." It is an expression for all time of the influence of family life at its best and highest.

Thus it came about that the Head of the Patriarchal Family was much more than the mere father of its younger members. He was high priest of the family religion; upon his strict fulfilment of his function depended the welfare not only of the generations to come, but also of all the generations past, and it is probable that the latter was held to be by far the more important. To serve the Family, to preserve its traditions, to protect its purity, this was the whole duty of man, at once his religion and morality; and it was this which invested with



absolute authority that member of the Family who for the time being represented it and was responsible for its welfare.

It is interesting to pause here and consider how much we have inherited from our Aryan ancestors of this intense feeling about the Family. No one, I think, will seriously question that we still possess a deep and instinctive feeling of its sanctity, which may be due to the pre-eminent position which it once occupied in the religion of our race, or which again may be simply accounted for by the fact that we are of the same nature as our ancestors. It is still the guardian of morality, and there are few who do not still consider it their first duty to guard the purity of domestic life, and who would not condemn a violation of the sanctity of the Family even more strongly than the violation of religious observances. So far it may be said that the religion of the hearth continues to hold the first place in man's spirit; but with this great difference, that the weight of feeling is now thrown forward into the future rather than back into the past. If asked as to the meaning of the Family at the present day, our first impulse would be to say that its chief *raison d'être*, the duties and responsibilities which hold it together, are no longer the cult of its ancestors, but the nurture of the young. The modern father ministers to the needs not of the vanishing but of the coming generation, he worships the rising and not the setting sun; and it is one of the strange paradoxes which the spiritual world is always offering to us that this

change should have brought with it, for good or for evil, so great a diminution of his personal authority. Even celibacy, if not altogether condoned, would now be deplored less for the sake of the dead than for the sake of the unborn, either the coming generation who must lack the comrades they should have had, or the souls which are denied existence in mortal life.

But though ancestor-worship has ceased amongst us as a conscious cult, it would be folly to imagine that the Family has shaken off the sway of its departed members, or that its fortunes are not largely ruled by them. Family pride, which at its best does so much to strengthen the young, largely consists in the desire to do nothing unworthy of those who have preceded us; and unwillingness to depart from the ways of our ancestors, even when altered conditions would make such departure "reasonable," is responsible for perhaps the greater part of conservatism. But even more powerful in its sway over us than our reluctance to depart from the ways of our ancestors, is our frequent inability to do so. The family spirit which was in them, moulding not only their ways of thought and speech and action but even their expression and features, is also in us, moulding our lives at every turn, and claiming us as inexorably as in the days when our forefathers gathered round the family altar. It is a common form of speech to say of this or that tendency or habit or capacity, more especially perhaps if we feel deprecatory about it, that we

“get it from” a parent or grandparent; and all the rest we are apt to regard as peculiarly our own. But if we could know as intimately as we know our more immediate parents the long line of ancestors through whom the family spirit has passed on its way to us, we should probably become fatalists in face of the apparently overwhelming evidence that there is nothing in us that has not come to us from, or at least through, the Family. Family portrait galleries are a striking confirmation of the persistence of characteristics which ultimately govern the fortunes of successive generations.

To realise the nature and influence of ancestor-worship upon family life we need not have recourse only to bygone times. Our increased knowledge of the East enables us to study it as actually moulding the lives of people at the present day. In *Japan and the Japanese*, a Japanese professor writes (p. 281), “Worship of ancestors still obtains, and exercises a powerful influence over the laws and customs of the people. . . . Buddhism, which is not based on this doctrine, but antagonistic to it, was compelled to yield to the deep-rooted belief of the people, and adapt itself to the national practice; while the introduction of Western civilisation has had no influence whatever in modifying the custom.” By some writers stress has been laid on the dread felt for the spirits of the departed, and the desire to appease them, but this motive for the cult does not seem to be recognised in Japan. “We celebrate the



anniversary of our ancestors, pay visits to their graves, offer flowers, food, drink, burn incense, and bow before their tombs, entirely from a feeling of love and a respect for their memory, and no question of 'dread' enters our mind in doing so. Moreover, in the records and traditions of our country there is nothing that suggests that ancestors were worshipped with a view of propitiating their souls."

"Ancestor-worship was the primeval religion of Japan from the earliest times of our history, which dates back more than 2500 years, and it is universally practised by the people at the present moment."

Marriage as an institution is recognised by the Japanese State as the means of perpetuating the worship of ancestors, whose posthumous happiness depends upon it. In the eyes of the old law it was essential that a family should perpetuate itself for ever; and it was accounted the greatest misfortune as well as the greatest crime to die without male issue. But amongst the Samurai it was formerly only the eldest sons who could legally marry; it was unnecessary for the younger sons, who had no apparent hope of ever becoming the head of a household, and who were therefore known as "heyazumi" or "dwellers in apartments."

Though Western civilisation has been without effect upon the religion of ancestor-worship in Japan, it appears to be considerably modifying the



autocracy of the Head of the House . . . “until recently a house was a corporation and a legal unit of the State. But ever since the Restoration of 1868 the family system has gradually fallen, until at present the house has entirely lost its corporate character. Formerly it was the head of the family *only* who could fill an official position, serve in the army, and hold property. But with the reform in the system of government the members of a house were permitted to fill public positions, and with the reforms of the law of military conscription both head and members are liable to military duties; while with the progress of commerce and industry the younger members were entitled to hold public bonds, stocks and share, which the law now recognises as their separate property. Although the house has thus lost its corporate character in the eyes of the law, it still, nevertheless, retains its character as the unit of society. The new Civil Code, which came into operation in 1898, allows members to secede from a household, and to establish a new ‘branch house’ with the consent of the head of the family; for the law recognises the tendency of social progress towards individualism, but at the same time it makes careful provision for the continuity of the house. It is provided in Article 744 that ‘the legal presumptive heir is not permitted to enter another house, or to establish a new one, except in cases where the necessity arises for the succession to maintain the main branch of the house.’ A legal presumptive heir is *heres necessarius*, as to him falls the duty of succeeding

to the headship of his house, and of upholding the continuity of its worship. For that reason he or she cannot become a member of another house by marriage, adoption, or any other cause; nor found a house of his or her own except where the more important duty of preserving the continuity of the worship of the main branch of the house renders such a step necessary."

The practice of ancestor-worship in Japan, and its influence upon the organisation of the Family, is strikingly analogous to that of our Aryan ancestors as described to us by the scholars, even down to the expedient of adoption upon failure of male issue. But it seems likely that in time to come the development will take a different line. Amongst our own ancestors the patriarchal organisation of the Family, and the power of the Head, persisted after the religion which gave rise to it had given way to new beliefs. In Japan, as we see, the religion persists untouched, *although* the patriarchal organisation is falling away before the advance of modern ideas, and modern forms of industry. Both those who believe that the unity of the Family is based upon economic causes, and that with the economic independence of its members it is bound to fall to pieces; and those, on the other hand, who believe that its greatest strength is rooted in more spiritual causes, must watch the coming development of the Family in Japan with the keenest interest. Not only do changes proceed with wonderful rapidity when once initiated amongst that wonderful people,

but the disintegrating forces of economic individualism will have to contend amongst them with the spiritual forces of ancestor-worship in its most complete form; not as the mere tradition and instinct which has survived amongst the Western peoples.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRE-HISTORIC FAMILY

IF now we ask what, if any, form of the Family preceded the Patriarchal, we find ourselves directed to sources of information, or perhaps one should say rather of conjecture, which are full of difficulty, and which can at best lead only to a tentative construction. The most important of these sources consists in the observation of existing races who are in what is believed to be a very early stage of development. Here, it is thought, we have under our very eyes a people still in a stage which we ourselves have passed through in the infancy of our race; let us study the position and constitution of the Family amongst them, and then we shall be able to realise what it has been amongst all primitive races, ourselves included, when first starting on the upward march. And if it were clear, in the first place, that these people really were in an early stage, and were not "degenerates"; and, in the second place, that all races of men must pass through the same stages of development, and manifest the same social phenomena and institutions, then the argument would carry great weight. But it seems clear, on the contrary, that so far as our present knowledge goes this is far from being the case; that there are



certain races of men whoseem to be incapable of developing a high state of social life ; and that to argue from the customs of the aborigines of Australia to those of our Aryan ancestors may be to rely upon a very misleading analogy. It might well be that their defective organisation of the Family was itself one of the chief causes which made their social development impossible.

To this difficulty of getting a true analogy to work from must be added the difficulty of observing rightly, and of rightly interpreting what is observed. It has been well remarked that the modern novel of "slum life" really tells us very little about the lives of the people it attempts to portray ; it only tells of the impression made upon the writer, which may be, and generally is, a very different matter. And if this is the case with people of our own race and nationality, how much more with people of wholly different race and traditions. Students of the subject are wholly dependent for their material upon the reports furnished by men who have travelled or lived amongst the people whose customs are being studied, and these reports are apt to conflict in a most perplexing manner. To take one instance only, the now famous theory of "group-marriage," which has formed a striking feature in the history of the Family.<sup>1</sup> The theory was largely based upon the evidence of the English missionary Lorimer Fison concerning a tribe of aborigines in South Australia. He describes this tribe as being divided into two classes; and every man in each of these classes as being by

<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie*, ch. ii.

birth the rightful husband of every woman in the other class, while similarly every woman in each class is the rightful wife of every man in the other. This description has been constructed as evidence of a time when the relation between the men and women of the two classes was one of promiscuity, and when therefore there was, strictly speaking, no family at all.

But if now we turn to later writers, we find them citing the Australian aborigine on the other side, *i.e.* *against* the theory of group-marriage, and in support of the view that the Family is to be found in the very lowest stages of social life. Grosse, for example quotes another witness of their customs (Curr) as saying that amongst the Australians not only is there no evidence of community of wives, but the husband is absolute and sole proprietor of his wife or wives;<sup>1</sup> while Professor Howard, in summing up the discussion, considers that "it is by no means established that communal or even group-marriage has ever prevailed amongst the Australian aborigines."<sup>2</sup> It seems possible that the real relation between the two groups noticed by Fison is simply that members of one class may not marry amongst themselves, but only amongst members of the other class—a very different matter from freedom to marry *all* members of the other.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the facts may be, it is clear that on one side or the other there must have been misunderstanding or misinterpretation, and clear, moreover, that such misinterpretation is very difficult to avoid.

<sup>1</sup> Grosse, *Die Formen der Familie und die Formen der Wirthschaft*, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*.

In addition to this observation of backward races of the present day, we have descriptions handed down to us by writers of the past; and in so far as these are descriptions of peoples who have subsequently developed into civilisation, they yield material which is far more relevant to the purpose. When Tacitus tells us of the customs of the Germans, or Cæsar of the customs of the Britons, there is no question of doubtful analogy; they actually are our own institutions in an early stage of development which are being described. On the other hand, the liability to misinterpretation is increased; not only may we doubt a Roman's power of fully comprehending what he sees or hears of a wild people whose very language he may not understand, there is also our own difficulty in interpreting his somewhat meagre generalisations to be taken into account. We cannot cross-question our informant; we cannot ask him whether this or that interpretation of what he tells us is the correct one; and we cannot get from him further details which he thought too insignificant to record, but which might be decisive for our purpose.

Finally, there is the difficulty that an observer of strange peoples is liable to confuse what is abnormal or accidental with what is really characteristic; he is naturally struck by phenomena which are startling and novel to himself, and many easily mistake an aberration for a custom. There are few of the strange "customs" quoted by investigators of this subject which might not be found to occur in the darker regions of any great modern city; but no one would



cite them as customary and typical of our social institutions merely because they exist amongst us.

Materials drawn from the observation of primitive races are thus subject to grave difficulties ; they may sometimes, however, find corroboration from another source, and that is the survival in the present day, or in trustworthy records, of customs which appear to be relics of them. Thus, for instance, the supporters of the "marriage by capture" theory find a double confirmation of it when they hear of existing tribes amongst whom (it is thought) capture is the normal method of obtaining a wife, and can also point to the fact that marriage customs exist amongst all Aryan peoples, which seem to be explicable as symbolising a forcible capture of the bride.

Such, then, are the main sources upon which we have to draw when we try to read the history of the Family before the time when it was recorded in ancient law. For a complete examination of the successive theories which have been put forward, and of the material out of which they have been constructed, I refer the reader to Professor Howard's *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, which contains also a very full bibliography. Here it is sufficient for my purpose to note the different views which have succeeded each other, and the conclusions which seem to hold the field at the present moment.

The first important contention against the theory that the Patriarchal Family represents the original form was advanced by the well-known Swiss writer



Bachofen, whose book on *Mutterrecht* appeared in 1861. "The material is drawn mainly from two sources: the fragmentary notices of the rules of kinship and the matrimonial customs of various peoples handed down from various writers, supplemented slightly through similar accounts by modern travellers; and an interpretation of the supposed symbolism of religious myths, particularly those of the Greeks."<sup>1</sup> Working from this material, Bachofen contends that so far from the original Family being patriarchal in its structure, it was strictly matriarchal. In the beginning was chaos. The first element of order was introduced into this chaos by woman, wearying of the reign of lawlessness and imposing her rule upon men. This she did by means of the mysteries of religion, and thus the Matriarchal Family was instituted in which the women were leaders and rulers. This continued until the woman grew too haughty to wed, when man rebelled and reasserted his superior power, and the Patriarchal Family was instituted. Each of these moments represents, according to Bachofen, a "universal culture-stage," through which all peoples pass in the development of their social life.

Since this theory was first published much has been written, both in confirmation and in criticism of it. The two main points towards which controversy has been directed are (1) whether the organisation of society into families was ever really preceded by a period in which such organisation was entirely absent; and (2) to what extent the position of women in the

<sup>1</sup> Howard, p. 39.

earlier type of Family was really analogous to that of the man in the Patriarchal Family.

If we take the latter point first, we find that a certain school of writers has been extraordinarily enthusiastic in support of the theory of a Golden Age for women, when there was not only a matriarchate, but even a gynæcocracy; when women, that is, ruled not only in the Family but also amongst the people. Friedrich Engels, for instance, maintains<sup>1</sup> that even now amongst peoples at a very early stage of development women hold a far higher position than in our present civilisation. But later and more cautious writers find little reason to suppose that there has been any general stage in human development where woman's position has been that of supremacy; while all the actual evidence, as distinct from mere inference, points to the fact that amongst peoples in an early stage of development, the position of women generally approaches very near to slavery.

But the reason which led to the hypothesis of a matriarchal Family is one of great interest. It is the discovery that amongst certain peoples, possibly amongst all at a certain stage of development, relationship is counted only through the mother, the children taking their name from the mother and not from the father. It is perhaps not unnatural that, with the analogy of the Roman Family before their minds, the earlier students should have assumed overhastily that this system of maternal kinship carried

<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie*, p. 32.

with it a system of maternal supremacy in the Family; that they should further have assumed a female supremacy in the clan is perhaps less excusable. It is true that a few tribes are known, notably the Hurons and Iroquois of North America, amongst whom women appear to guide and rule to a very remarkable degree; but such instances "belong to the rarest curiosities of ethnology" (Grosse, p. 161), and even in these exceptional cases accounts differ very much as to the actual extent of the women's power. Lafitau, as quoted by Grosse, speaks of them as possessing all real authority, as well as the land and its produce, while they are masters of peace and war, guardians of the public treasure, and rulers over their children. On the other hand, Schoolcraft (quoted by Westermarck, p. 500) represents the position in a much milder light: the Iroquois are "the only tribes in America, north and south, so far as we have any accounts, who gave to women a conservative power in their political deliberations. The Iroquois matrons had their representative in the public councils; and they exercised a negative, or what we call a veto power, in the important question of the declaration of war. They had the right also to interpose in bringing about a peace." Moreover, adds Westermarck, they had considerable privileges in the Family.

With a few exceptions like these, the rule appears to be that the man is undisputed master over both wife and children, no matter whether the latter are called by his name or the mother's; and still more certainly is he the ruler in the tribe. In so far as



the authority within the Family rests with the father, the Patriarchal Family may be said to co-exist with a system of kinship through the mother, and at the earliest stages of development. But it is, generally speaking, a power based merely upon the superior physical strength of the man, and therefore incapable of organising the Patriarchal Family in its fullest sense. What it does do is to preclude the possibility of a really matriarchal Family, and we are forced, however reluctantly, to abandon the vision of Woman's Golden Age. Amongst the peoples of the earliest type we know—the "lower hunters"—her lot is worst of all: "the woman has as yet nothing to set against the natural physical superiority of hunter and warrior; hence she becomes of necessity a slave without rights, the obedient servant of the desires and laziness of her lord and husband" (Grosse). Her emancipation comes but slowly with the development of the race, depending, as some hold, upon the increasing value of her services, and her increasing capacity for economic independence, or, as others maintain, upon the influence of religion and culture. But at the lowest level, her best or only chance of considerate treatment from her husband lies in having powerful relations to whom she can appeal for protection against him.

There seems to be, then, no sufficient ground for the theory that the patriarchal was preceded by a matriarchal Family. So far as we can see, what really preceded it was a less highly organised form of the patriarchal Family, sometimes, but not always, co-existing with a system of relationship through the mothers.



If now we turn to the first of the stages assumed by Bachofen, that of chaos without any organised family life, we find that it has been subjected to criticism quite as destructive. This theory of an original promiscuity amongst primitive peoples involves an entire absence of Family life, the children belonging to the tribe in general, and being protected by all the men indiscriminately ;<sup>1</sup> and when first promulgated it was accepted unreservedly by the sociologists (e.g. by H. Spencer in his *Principles of Sociology*). For confirmation of it they pointed not only to institutions and customs which they maintained to be inexplicable except as relics of such a state, but also to a number of apparent proofs that even in the present day the lowest peoples live in this condition. But closer investigation of the evidence has shown that "there is absolutely not one single primitive people" whose condition approximates to, or even indicates, such a system, or want of system. "This firmly-welded single Family is in no sense a late attainment of civilisation, but it exists even at the lowest stage of culture, as a rule, without exception."<sup>2</sup> And with regard to the customs which are thought to be relics of such a time, partly they seem to be capable of other interpretations, and partly there is no doubt that abnormal deviations from morality have been mistaken for normal customs. They have been subjected to detailed criticism by Westermarck, and his conclusion is that "there is not a shred of genuine evidence for the notion that promiscuity ever

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Grosse, p. 42.

formed a general stage in the social history of mankind. The hypothesis of promiscuity, instead of belonging, as Professor Giraud-Teulon thinks, to the class of hypotheses which are scientifically permissible, has no real foundation, and is essentially unscientific."<sup>1</sup>

As far back, then, as we can penetrate into the early history of the human race we find the Family already existing, and we find the father as the protector and master of the Family. This is not equivalent to saying that it has been so from the first; the real beginnings of human life seem to be impenetrably shrouded from sight. But Westermarck suggests still another way of approaching the subject, and that is through the customs of those members of the animal world which are most nearly akin to the human race. From the gregariousness of many animals it has been customary to argue to an analogous gregariousness of the human race, and to maintain that it is only at a later stage that the Family develops within the tribe; but Westermarck points out that this gregariousness exists only very partially amongst just those animals which are nearest in other respects to man. The orang-utan, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee, all live in pairs with their young; assembling in numbers at times, more especially when food is plentiful, but for the most part wandering in solitary families. "Is it not, then, most probable that our fruit-eating human or half-human ancestors, living on the same kind of

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, p. 133.

food, and requiring about the same quantities of it as the man-like apes, were not more gregarious than they? It is likely, too, that subsequently, when man became partly carnivorous, he continued, as a rule, this solitary kind of life, or that gregariousness became his habit only in part. 'An animal of a predatory kind,' says Mr. Spencer, 'which has prey that can be caught and killed without help, profits by living alone; especially if its prey is much scattered, and is secured by stealthy approach, or by lying in ambush. Gregariousness would here be a positive disadvantage. Hence the tendency of large carnivores, and also of small carnivores that have feeble and widely-distributed prey, to lead solitary lives.' It is, indeed, very remarkable that even now there are savage peoples who live rather in separate families than in tribes, and that most of these peoples belong to the very rudest races in the world."<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, a far cry from this primitive, self-governing family group, based upon the elementary passions of possession, jealousy, and parental affection, to the highly organised group of to-day, bound together by mutual contract, supported and limited by its existence within the more powerful institution of the State, recognised as a matter of public as well as private interest, and with an age-long history behind it of modifications and confirmations. Though itself the first and most permanent of all human institutions, it was inevitable that the growth of other

<sup>1</sup> Westermarck, p. 43.



institutions should greatly affect and modify it; and of these the most potent in their influence have been Religion, the State, and the organised accumulation of wealth and private property. It has been greatly affected, again, by the varying economic conditions under which people have lived, and by their relations as conquerors or conquered to other peoples. One of the earliest ways which man devised of expressing his superior wealth or strength was to appropriate, by means of purchase or conquest, more wives than his neighbours. But throughout all changes one husband and one wife has been the constant type, all other forms mere aberrations, and the process of development has been always towards a more deliberately conscious and therefore higher form of monogamy.<sup>1</sup> And throughout all changes, again, the characteristic feature has persisted that father, mother, and children have formed one group, of which the father has been the head in the sense not only of being the master, but also of being responsible for its protection and maintenance.

One of the arguments which has been brought forward in support of an extreme form of Communism and State Socialism is, that the Family has been merely the temporary product of a particular stage of economic development, and that with the sweeping away of capitalism and private property the Family also will disappear. Then the children will be cared for by society as a whole, and men and women will

<sup>1</sup> Howard, p. 150.



be free to enter into or abandon married life as their fancy may dictate.<sup>1</sup> If such a time should ever come, it will be in no sense a gradual development from the past, there is no justification for it in the history of the human race, and it will be as catastrophic in the moral world as an earthquake is in the physical. There seem few limits indeed to the deviations to which humanity is liable in its upward progress; but it would seem as if the one essential characteristic, which no force of circumstances has ever been able to destroy, or even to subdue for more than a short time and amongst degenerate specimens, is the peculiar and unique feeling of parent for child. It may show itself in many ways, it may be kind or cruel, wise or foolish, it may involve infinite self-sacrifice or infinite tyranny, it may be called instinct, or possession, or love, or responsibility, but always it has maintained itself against all other claims, and in so maintaining itself has created the Family. Parents, indeed, have sacrificed their children to their gods or to the State, but always it has been recognised as a gift, and a gift of the highest order, which they alone had the right to make. And if it should ever come to pass that men and women will be content to abandon their children to the community merely for the sake of their own greater ease, it will mean such a breaking up of the whole moral nature of the race that not the Family alone, but the State itself will be shattered in its foundations.

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, Engels, p. 64.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FAMILY IN RELATION TO INDUSTRY

THERE is a German saying in which German sociologists like to sum up one theory of human development, the saying "wenn man weiss, was ein Volk isst, so weiss man auch, was es ist." It owes much of its attractiveness to a play upon words which does not survive translation into English (when we know what a people eats, we know also what it is), but it embodies a truth which must not be lost sight of in considering human affairs. There is no tendency to neglect it at the present day; everywhere we hear the cry of the majority that food, and more food, and still more food, is the one thing needful for social salvation, while a sturdy and growing minority proclaim their faith that to eat less food is the sovereign panacea for all the ills of the individual. And meanwhile the number of those who have given in their adhesion to some particular form of diet as that which will conduce to the highest life increases every day. There is a humorous account in one of Miss Wilkins' New England stories of a bad-tempered man who tried to cure his fault by changing his diet, and he puts the case for the materialist view of life perhaps as shrewdly

as it ever has been put. "What we want," he says, "is to eat the kind of things that will strengthen knowledge an' spirit an' self-control, because the first two ain't any account without the last; but there ain't no kind of food that's known that can do that. If there is, I ain't never heard of it. But what we can do, is to eat the kind of things that won't strengthen the animal nature at the expense of the spiritual. We know that animal food does that; we can see how it works in tigers and bears. Now, it's the spiritual part of us we want to strengthen, because that's the biggest strength we can get, an' it's worth more. It's what gives us the rule over other animals. It's better for us to eat some other kind of food, if we get real weak and pindlin' on it, rather than eat animal food an' make the animal in us stronger than the spiritual, so we won't be any better than wild tigers an' bears, an' lose our rule over the other animals" (*Pembroke*, p. 51).

There is nothing older since man first began to think about himself, that greatest of human puzzles, than his belief that he can change his moral nature by what he eats. We hear of savages who will eat the heart of a brave enemy in the confident belief that in so doing he adds the valour of the dead man to his own; and we are told that sacramental meals are rooted in the same faith. But to the savage it probably never occurs to reflect, while the educated man finds it easy to forget, that for a man to deliberately change or regulate his diet with a view to the cultivation of certain qualities, implies that the know-



ledge and desire of those qualities is already active in him, and that the material food is but the instrument or means by which the active spiritual principle seeks to strengthen itself. He is determined to be brave, or holy, or meek, and more or less ignorantly controls his economic conditions to advance his desire.

It is much the same with the attempt to explain the development of humanity, or of any human institution, entirely by the economic conditions within which it develops. Just in proportion as man raises himself from the lowest stage of development, his economic conditions become what he, having certain ends in view, desires them to be ; and though they in turn react on him—if it were not so he would not wish to alter them—it would perhaps be truer to say that they enable him to be what he desires, than that they make him what he is.

If now we approach the question of the organisation of the Family with this line of thought in our minds, we find one school of sociologists inclining to the view that we must seek for an explanation of it, as of all other human institutions, in the economic conditions prevalent at any given place or time. It requires certain economic conditions to call it into being, it changes its form to correspond to changes in those conditions, and still further changes in those conditions may lead to its total disappearance.

Perhaps the most systematic attempt to trace this connection is that of Dr. E. Grosse in his book *Die Formen der Familie und die Formen der Wirthschaft*. "We shall show," he says, "that the different



forms of the Family correspond to the different forms of Industry (*Wirthschaft*), that the character of each particular form of Family can be explained in its essential features by the character of the form of industry in which it is noted." It is true, he adds, that many other factors also exert an influence upon the organisation and function of the Family, but he proposes to confine himself to that which he holds to be the most powerful—the economic conditions. At the same time, important as he considers these to be, he does not admit that there have ever been economic conditions under which the Family did not exist.

He begins by distinguishing the three main forms in which the Family organises itself. These vary primarily in extent. They are: the *Sonderfamilie*, consisting of two generations only, parents and their children; the *Grossfamilie*, which includes three or four generations; and the *Sippe*, or clan, which is a group of persons bound together by a common ancestry. Within the *Sippe* he distinguishes again the *Vatersippe*, or clan in which descent is counted through males alone, and the *Muttersippe*, in which descent is counted through females.

Not only does he consider that the form which the Family takes is determined by economic conditions; he also maintains that economic considerations have always been by far the most potent in determining marriage—both the fact of marriage and the choice of a particular husband or wife. Men seek wives who will support them, or wives who will be good housekeepers; above all, wives who will bear them children. And they desire children again for economic reasons:

daughters that they may be sold, sons who may work and fight for them, who may feed them not only in this life, but also in the next. Some concession, indeed, he is prepared to make to the "mutual fondness" between parents and children, but this he thinks exists mainly between mother and child. A father has to learn to love his children, while children regard a father more with reverent fear than with any heartfelt liking.

Whether the desire for children can really be explained away into such crude elements, even in the lower stages of human development, seems open to doubt. The theory seems indeed to imply a much too advanced power of calculation for the simple savage. It is said that one reason why the lower tribes never proceed to an agricultural or pastoral life is, that they have not the foresight and patience required to await the processes of Nature. If this is the case where a year or less is sufficient to bring the desired result, is it not crediting them with rather much economic foresight to suppose that they will arrange a *mariage de convenance*, not merely for the services of the wife—which indeed are immediate, and imply little foresight—but for the sake of advantages which will not accrue for periods varying from ten to twenty years? At a higher stage of intellectual development, no doubt, such nice calculations of profit and loss may form an important element in the value which a father attaches to his children; but then there will also be a very much greater complexity of feeling. We have already seen how, amongst certain peoples, the

motives which make the desire for children the most imperative in life have passed into a highly spiritualised religion, quite as far removed from any merely economic consideration as Christianity itself.

In considering the effect of industry upon the different forms assumed by the Family, Grosse proceeds to distinguish five types of peoples, characterised by being at five stages of economic development. These are: the peoples who hunt, and these are subdivided again into higher and lower; the pastoral peoples who tend flocks and herds; and the agricultural peoples, these also being divided into higher and lower. None of these divisions are absolute, but they represent the nature of the *main* occupations of the people concerned.

I. The LOWER HUNTERS are the tribes which represent the lowest stage of development known to us. That they are "primitive," in the sense of representing the earliest stage through which mankind has passed, it is impossible to affirm. Even such a small amount of culture as they possess is the result of a long process of experience and development; while the suggestion has been made that some at least of them are the degraded remnants of a people once living under better conditions, and possessing a much higher degree of culture. Their food consists of animals slain by the men, and of roots and fruits collected by the women. Owing to the poverty of their lands and the rudeness of their weapons, they soon exhaust the resources of a neighbourhood, and only a perpetual



wandering preserves them from famine, while they constantly suffer from hunger. Hence their numbers never grow large; a high death-rate and the practice of infanticide preserve the relations between population and subsistence, and it is only occasionally and for short periods that they meet together in large numbers. This mode of life excludes the possibility of developing higher forms of industry, and every one makes his own tools and weapons, besides providing his own subsistence. Private property is limited to the fewest and most indispensable articles, and the hunting-ground belongs to all the men of a tribe in common. Differences in rank are hardly known, all adult men being equal, except that the elder derive a certain authority from their richer experience, and individuals who can claim magical powers exert some influence. What little is known of their religion shows a firm belief in the continued life of the soul after death, and the desirability of fulfilling certain duties towards the departed, generally including the provision of food.

Though there are no marriage laws amongst these peoples, the custom of living in Families is universal. Generally speaking also they are monogamous, though this perhaps is owing rather to poverty than to any objection to a plurality of wives. A wife being obtained by purchase or exchange is the absolute property of the man, and is used or misused at his pleasure. All laborious and despised work is imposed upon the women; they collect plants, insects, and shell-fish, cook the food, carry wood, build the huts,



prepare nets, sacks, and clothing, and when the tribe is on its wanderings carry the whole of its possessions, as well as the little children. In short, the position of the woman is that of an inferior but useful creature—a beast of burden, despised, ill-treated, but valued.

The relation of the man to his children is similar. He regards them as his absolute property, and this whether the clan counts relationship through males or through females. His power is as complete for a time as that of the Roman Pater, but ceases when he has handed over his daughter to another man, and when his son has passed the tests of manhood. He frequently sells his children or exchanges them.

Children have no rights against their parents. There is no system of inheritance, because there is nothing to inherit, weapons and tools being left with their dead owner, while the land remains the common property of the tribe.

It is thought that the small hordes into which these tribes divide themselves while on their wanderings generally consist of members of the same family, held together merely by habit and familiarity; but on this point there seems to be considerable uncertainty. And though a father's power over his young children is absolute, there is no evidence of such an organisation as we find in the typical patriarchal Family.

II. Where the hunting and fishing grounds are exceptionally rich, and the conditions of life are therefore more favourable, we find higher grades of hunters, characterised by a fuller development of culture.

Such especially are the hunters of North America and of North-eastern Asia. Owing to the greater abundance of food, especially on the coasts, the communities consist of much larger numbers than among the lower hunters, and their settlements are of a much more permanent nature. The division of labour as between men and women follows the same lines; but both sexes have reached a higher stage of efficiency, and a certain amount of specialisation in handicraft has been achieved. Moreover, they make and produce more than is sufficient for their own needs, and are thus enabled to carry on exchange with neighbouring peoples and to accumulate wealth in various forms, such as skins, blankets, and even slaves. The ground is the property of the tribe or clan, but "movable property" is sufficiently abundant to give rise to great inequality in wealth. Amongst these peoples the rich have better houses than the poor, and a plutocracy is common, influence and position being determined principally by wealth. There is little political organisation, the largest community being the tribe, which holds together but loosely. The village communities, having more interests in common, are more firmly bound; but the strongest social bond is the household.

The higher hunters, like the lower, live without exception in Families (*Sonderfamilie*). Marriage is mostly monogamous, a plurality of wives being allowed by custom but seldom permitted by circumstances; for here again, owing to the custom of purchase, only the rich can afford more than one

wife. Sometimes, indeed, instead of purchase, a wife may be obtained in exchange for service to her father, but in one way or another she must be paid for. Here again, therefore, she is regarded as the property of her husband and treated as a slave. "Women are made for work," a chief is quoted as saying, "one woman can drag and carry more than two men." Nor is their position any better amongst those tribes which count descent through the mother only, except in a few cases where the greater respect in which they are held seems to be attributable to the fact that the man receives from his wife's relations a dower, which he has to return if he sends her away without justification.

Here, again, the children are regarded as the property of the father while young. Little is known about customs of inheritance. Generally speaking, the son inherits from the father; sometimes he inherits from the maternal uncle, and where this is the case the uncle is apt to have more authority than the father.

Amongst many of the tribes large houses are found containing a number of families who are presumably closely related. Amongst other tribes these "great families" form village communities. Whether the household community is also an industrial community, or how far there is private property in the produce of the chase, etc., is not known.

III. PASTORAL PEOPLES.—These tribes, whose principal occupation is tending flocks and herds, seldom



confine themselves entirely to it; they also practise agriculture to some extent, but generally regard it as a lower and almost unworthy occupation. It is a mistake also to suppose that they are entirely nomadic; some few of them never change their dwelling-places, and though for most of them wandering has become a necessity of their natures, it is always within fairly fixed limits, within a domain which is regarded as the property of the tribe, and which is frequently subdivided amongst particular families (both *Sonderfamilie* and *Grossfamilie*).

The tending of the herds has developed out of the chase, and is always the business of the man. On the other hand, the elements of agriculture, together with other undignified and laborious work, are left to the women or to slaves. Life is generally much richer and more comfortable than amongst the hunters, but it is exposed to great risks. There is difficulty in developing such industrial activities as architecture or pottery; but the making of textiles and dressing of skins, and sometimes working in metals, are brought to a high degree of perfection. But the nature of the life is on the whole hostile to industry, and the men in particular are nearly always lazy and phlegmatic.

While the land is the common property of the tribe or clan, the herds are always private property; hence there are great inequalities in wealth, which consists entirely in cattle or wives. One reason for this inequality is the prevalence of war, which enables the strong warrior to appropriate the cattle, wives,

and slaves of his enemy. Tribal feuds, though petty, are almost continuous, and impress a rough and savage character upon the pastoral life, which is clearly marked in the form of the Family. The tribes are scattered over such vast extents of ground that only a very strong ruler succeeds in making a political unity of them ; but among the Bedouin Arabs every important family makes a camp in the desert, and weaker families attach themselves to the more powerful. The heads of the families are united under one chief, who is called the sheikh, but who has no more important function than that of presiding in council.

The family organisation of the herdsman is much better known than that of the hunters. The Family is based upon a marriage which may be either monogamous or polygamous, the nomad taking as many wives as he can pay for and maintain. Purchase of women is an habitual and open business transaction, the price being determined according to the rank, beauty, and usefulness of the woman. Wife purchase is commonly supposed to have succeeded to, and developed out of, wife capture ; but this is a mistake. There are instances amongst all peoples of women being captured for purposes of marriage ; but never as a recognised form of marriage, only as a punishable act of violence infringing the limits of right (Grosse, p. 105).

Though polygamy is recognised and desired, the number of the herdspeople who actually possess a plurality of wives is comparatively small, partly because of the high price of women, and partly because

of the difficulty of keeping up several establishments. Very often, again, only one of the women is regarded as the legitimate wife, and her children alone are competent to inherit. But all alike are slaves of the man who has bought them, and amongst the nomads the woman is even more oppressed than amongst the hunters, since no other form of industry gives the man such overwhelming superiority. The only occupations which confer any dignity, herd-tending and war, belong to the man, and the women have no means of winning respect from the rough herdsmen and robbers. Daughters are valued solely in view of the future purchase money; and women in general are regarded as an investment of capital, the man who buys them doing so with the intention of repaying himself by their work and by the children they bear him.

Generally speaking, the woman has no property, and the result of her work belongs to the man who owns her<sup>1</sup>; but in some tribes a definite settlement is made upon her, and in one at least, community of property is part of the marriage contract. It always remains true, however, that in their mutual personal relations the man has all the rights, the woman all the duties. But the woman does not break all connection with her former family, which forms a sort of court of appeal for both parties. Sometimes her husband accuses her to them, and they undertake her punishment; sometimes she takes refuge with them,

<sup>1</sup> This was the case in England until 1870-74, when the Married Women's Property Acts were passed.



and may even remain with them permanently if they return the money paid for her.

Amongst the nomads the man is regarded as lord and proprietor of his children, or of any children borne by his wives. Until they form independent households of their own they work for him and can be sold by him as if they were slaves. While they bear themselves with the greatest respect towards their father, their attitude towards their mother almost invariably reflects the general contempt in which women are held. In some tribes the authority of the father lasts until his death; more often the son throws off all allegiance on attaining manhood, and neglects or even ill-treats the father who has become old or feeble.

Women are generally excluded also from all share in the inheritance, and where they do partake they receive a much smaller portion than the sons. The general rule is that the eldest son inherits exclusively, but sometimes there is equal division amongst sons.<sup>1</sup> The nomads attach much importance to relation of kinship and are proud of their ancestors, these being counted in the male line alone. But the feeling is not strong enough to bind the members of a clan into any close organisation. The feeding of their flocks, which necessitates their spreading over much ground, makes the *Sonderfamilie* (two generations) the largest group which is economically advantageous; on the other hand, the need for mutual protection prevents

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that this paragraph applies almost literally to peoples of high civilisation in Western Europe to-day.

them from wandering too far from their relations. Thus it happens that in times of peace they live as isolated families; whilst in times of war they gather together in "great families" and clans. They have no economic interests in common; and when no external danger unites them in obedience to the clan patriarch, the individual fathers of families go about their own business and are little concerned with each other.

Before passing to Grosse's description of the fourth type, the lower agriculturists, it may be interesting to study in rather more detail a particular community concerning which Le Play has given a full description in *Les Ouvriers Européens*. It is an account of one of the villages of the Bachkirs, a semi-nomadic pastoral people living in the Urals, which illustrates the transition from a pastoral to an agricultural life. In family organisation, and in the position of the women, as well as in economic conditions, they share the characteristics of both types.

In the particular village chosen by Le Play for his studies, the population consists mainly of these semi-nomad Bachkirs, living partly upon the produce of the arable lands around the village where they live in winter, partly upon herds, especially of mules, which in summer are taken by the whole community up to the pastures on the mountain sides.

These people have too strong a passion for repose ever to attain wealth; but their possession in common of a considerable territory, and the organisation

of the Family, prevent any great poverty. Those who are well off take into their families as domestic workers such poor orphans as cannot provide for themselves, and abundant means of subsistence makes it always easy to provide for any who fall into temporary distress. What wealth a family has is measured principally by the number of wives wedded by the chief of the house, and also by the number of mules and other animals which he possesses. The particular family visited possessed three mules, but the chief had only one wife.

In a Bachkir family it is usual for all the married brothers to remain in the paternal house, and community of habitation and interests often continues after the death of the father. The household in question consisted of the families of two brothers, consisting of eight members, all under the absolute control of the elder brother. All the inhabitants of the village belonged to the Mahometan religion, but only about half obeyed the precepts of the Koran. The children received elementary instruction in a school conducted by the Mullah, and the desire for education was increasing, those who could afford it sending their sons to study as boarders under a celebrated master living 35 kilometres distant. The chief vice of the people is their inveterate propensity towards a life of pastoral quiet; the utmost at which a family aims is the possession of eight or ten mules, which would enable it to dispense altogether with agriculture and live entirely upon khoumis.

The women, who are bought by their husbands,



are absolutely dependent upon them; theirs is the heaviest part in the agricultural work, and they do the whole of the domestic work, even to saddling their husband's horse whenever he goes out. But as mothers their authority is complete, and they no less than the father enjoy the respect and affection of the children. Moreover, here as elsewhere, notwithstanding the power of the husband, women will often by force of individual character obtain influence even in matters concerning the interests of the community.

With regard to marriage, the first step is that the man makes a payment to the parents of the girl, which is called the kolime, and remains in their possession. The kolime increases in proportion to the wealth of the families concerned, the physical perfections of the bride, the imperfections and age of the husband, the number of wives already possessed by him, etc. The contract is signed before the Mullah, in presence of six witnesses; the man pays down a first instalment of the kolime, but the marriage is not celebrated nor the woman given to her husband until the entire payment has been made, which generally involves a delay of three or four years. The parents hand over to the girl some domestic animals, clothes, and furniture; it is *de rigueur* that she brings with her at least the curtains of her bed. Custom strictly prohibits marriage between young people belonging to the same village, a fact which seems to point to the village community having been originally a family community.

The children are carefully tended while young,

and are left to develop in complete freedom from work. Towards the age of ten or twelve they begin to go to school under the Mullah, who teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic, and especially the reading of the Koran. The girls, under the surveillance of an old woman, attend school until marriage, being taught in a different class from the boys. Owing to the necessity of paying the kolime the men never marry until twenty-five or thirty, the girls from nineteen to twenty. The father of the family generally keeps his married sons with him. He disposes of all the goods of the community, and determines their transmission after his death by means of a will prepared with the help of the Mullah, generally assigning to the sons twice as much as to the daughters. He has absolute authority over all the families united in his household, distributing the work, buying and selling, and disposing of the common funds. If he dies suddenly, the mother, if still living, takes charge of the community; one at least of the married sons remaining with her, and the others being free to form new households.

With regard to property, it is difficult to distinguish precisely between private property and subventions from the community. Strictly speaking, only the houses and their immediate surroundings are private property; but the arable lands and hay meadows are assigned to families, and transmitted in them from generation to generation. But the rights of the family over its lands are

limited; the community sometimes makes additions to them from the reserve land not yet divided, and sometimes withdraws into this reserve land from which the family to which it has been assigned have not taken a crop for some years. This right of the community to resume possession is never really burdensome to individuals, while it protects them from the abuses of mortgage and usury. The rights of usage assigned to families over the summer pastures, the woods, the game, the fish, wild fruits, etc., never bear the character of private property; individuals enjoy them only as members of the community and under definite regulation (*Les Ouvriers Européens*, vol. ii.).

So far as concerns the position of women and children in the Family, these people have made considerable progress towards the next stage described by Grosse, that of the Lower Agriculturists.

IV. These are the groups "which devote themselves exclusively or mainly to the cultivation of edible plants"; and they are distinguished by the fact that *all* persons capable of and obliged to work take an active part in such production, from the Higher Agriculturists, amongst whom many of the workers are engaged in manufactures. In numbers the people of this stage greatly exceed all the preceding; but it cannot be said that all of them possess a higher culture, many of them being inferior to most nomads both in possessions and in culture.

The most marked new characteristic of this stage



is, that agriculture requires a life settled in one place, and it is this which makes it difficult for hunters and herdsmen to make the transition to it. Another essential difference lies in the fact that the most valuable possession of the tiller of the soil is the land, which is not—like the herds of the nomad—his private property. Originally at least it is the common property of the group. And amongst the lower agriculturists, for whom there is abundance of land available, the welfare of a community increases with its numbers, since agriculture is most easily carried on by many working in co-operation. Thus agriculture not only holds men in one place, it also holds them together by common interests, and has therefore a much greater socialising power than hunting and herding.

Equal right to the land gives equal right to the produce, and this right is given effect to in various ways. The harvest may be divided amongst the particular families and individuals, or each may take what he needs from the general supplies, or again amongst some tribes a special piece of the common land is assigned to each family for its use. This does not lead, as might be expected, to equality amongst the members of the community: individuals who are especially active and capable always acquire greater possessions (*e.g.* by taking in waste lands, etc.) and also greater power. Moreover, the settled life conduces also to the development of industry and trade, by which private property is increased; and thus the distinction between rich and poor

appears, notwithstanding the common property in land.

In agriculture we find for the first time that not the small Family—the *Sonderfamilie*—is of most importance, but the *Sippe* or clan, which here develops itself into an organised institution far exceeding all others in influence, and controls the life and industry of all members of the community. These clans may be bound together either by paternal or maternal relationship; but the latter seems to have been in the past far more prevalent than the former; and it is still more powerful amongst the agricultural peoples than amongst the hunters and herdsmen. The reason for this lies in the nature of the industry, for the cultivation of plants was originally a form of production belonging essentially to women. “Women invented agriculture” (is not this almost equivalent to saying that women invented civilisation?); and amongst most of the more primitive peoples it is carried on almost exclusively by women. And it is not only a duty of the woman, it is also her right, carrying with it other rights, and more especially a right to the land which she has made fertile. Many of the tribes in this group of peoples hold this view very strongly, and the land descends in the clan through the mother.

As the woman’s labour is valuable to the clan in which she is born, the man who marries her must either compensate for her loss by a money payment, or must himself enter into her clan and serve for her.

For the agriculturist, whose work needs much labour, it is as important to increase the numbers of his Family, as it is for the herdsman to increase the numbers of his herds. And it is owing to the value of her work that the woman, though still subordinate to the man, yet meets with better treatment amongst the agriculturists than amongst the herdsmen and hunters. Marriage is usually monogamous, but here again polygamy is recognised.

It is amongst the agriculturists alone that actual instances of *matriarchal* clans are known as distinct from the clans which are merely characterised by the maternal system of relationship. But even here they are rare, the maternal clans themselves being generally under the guidance of the oldest or most respected men. The same is true of the families; where the women are strong in the clan, the position of women and children is strong in the Family; but for the most part the Family is under the rule of the father. And when the paternal kinship rules in the clan, then the sway of the man is absolute; he is lord and proprietor of wives and children.<sup>1</sup>

The Germans, as described by Cæsar, lived in village communities which were also clans or groups of relations. The same organisation is found at the present day amongst the Slavs. Those of them who are agriculturists live and work in household communities. Each such household (*zadruga*) consists of a group of descendants of the same ancestor, who

<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that the Bachkir village described by Le Play (see above) represented a Sippe or clan, from the fact that marriages within the community were prohibited.



live together, possess their land and cultivate it in common, and consume the produce of their work in common. The numbers contained in the household used to be greater; but the organisation remains the same. The chief of the "zadruga" is called "starjesina," and is either nominated by his predecessor, or chosen by his companions. He assigns the daily tasks, superintends the work, and disposes of the income; but he cannot entirely dispense with the assent of the other adult members of the Family, and according to modern ideas it is not *he* who owns all the property, but the community, including the women. Nevertheless, the women hold a very subordinate position; "if a woman meets a man in the road, even if he is younger than she, she must kiss his hand."

In Russia a similar organisation still exists over immense tracts of country. The "bolschaja" unites several generations and households allied by the bonds of blood and of common interests. It often happens that several married sons, several households of collateral relatives, live together in the same house, or on the same farm, where they work together under the rule of father or grandfather. All the property is held in common. Generally there is no inheritance or division of property. House, garden, implements, cattle, harvests, utensils of every kind, remain the common property of the Family from one generation to another. No one thinks of claiming a special share for himself. When the father of the Family dies, the respect and rule either passes to the eldest

man of the community, his brother or son ; or sometimes the Family chooses a new head. Out of the "bolschaja" has grown the "mir," the Russian village community. This, again, is not merely an administrative unit, but a patriarchal community, an extension of the Family, into which a stranger cannot be admitted without the consent of the majority. This village clan possesses the land in common, divides it at certain periods amongst the individual households, and determines the time and nature of work in the fields.

Though we find that agriculture thus increases the power of the clan as against the Family, it has never resulted in completely superseding it. And the clan itself is strong only so long as it possesses the land in common ; it breaks down so soon as this is taken from it. Moreover, as soon as agriculture ceases to be the ruling form of Production, the clan organisation is doomed : and it is here that we enter upon the fifth and final stage of culture, that of the Higher Agriculturists.

V. It is characteristic of the peoples in this stage, that while agriculture continues to be carried on it is left to one section of the people alone, the others turning to different occupations. Manufactures tend to become more and more important, and these peoples might be called more appropriately manufacturing. The change brings with it a change in the relative values of different kinds of property ; the greater part of the wealth consisting in objects produced by manufacture and not by agriculture.

Amongst the lower agriculturists it is immovable common property which preponderates; amongst the higher, not only the enormously increased amount of movable property, but the greater part of the land itself is private property. But the most important differences arise out of the advance in division of labour, owing to which the people of the later type are not only far more differentiated, but also, because of their mutual dependence, far more integrated, than the people who live in comparatively self-sufficing productive groups.

There are two types of this higher order of peoples. The first and oldest is that in which the "great Family" prevails, and which is represented by the ancient civilisation of Europe, and by the Chinese and Japanese of to-day.

The second consists of the Western European peoples and their kindred; and in it the *Sonderfamilie*—the Family of two generations—prevails.<sup>1</sup>

It is in the first that we find the typical patriarchal Family, the "great Family," which is under the dominion of the Patriarch. This Family group always existed within the clan; but so long as the clan maintained its power the authority of the Patriarch was limited, and it was only when the clan broke down, that the Patriarch, inheriting its power in addition to his own, became full autocrat.<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen what the Patriarchal

<sup>1</sup> This is only partially true; see accounts of French families.

<sup>2</sup> This is the explanation of the Patriarchal authority from the economic point of view, and it is interesting to compare it with the explanation through ancestor-worship, which is also admitted by Grosse.



Family was in Rome and still is in Japan. In China also the "great Family" continues to maintain its industrial organisation. All earnings of the members of the Family flow into the common chest, and this is controlled by the Patriarch. But the Patriarch's power, though great, is limited by documentary family statutes, which determine expenditure in different directions and assign duties and punishments. The women in the Family are completely subordinate; a girl is held to be incapable of either virtues or crimes; and the power of the man over his wife extends to his children and is unlimited.

The "great family" holds together only so long as the father is able to maintain his authority over successive generations. But in Western Europe this authority has gradually disappeared before other and stronger influences: that of the State, that of Religion, and that of changed economic conditions, which have made it easy for the younger members of the Family to break away and earn their living independently. Thus we get once more, as the typical family unit of modern civilisation, the original *Sonderfamilie*, the two parents and their dependent children.

Before proceeding to consider in detail the nature of this modern Family in its relation to external influences, we may pause to consider how far this survey justifies the view that the form of the Family is dependent upon economic conditions. It is sum-

marised almost entirely from Grosse's *Die Formen der Familie und die Formen der Wirthschaft*, and though it is necessarily brief, I have endeavoured to preserve in it all the main features upon which the argument depends.

In the first place, we find that the Family in its ultimate form persists throughout *all* economic conditions without exception. So far, therefore, there is no justification for the view that, being dependent upon certain economic conditions, it will disappear if those particular conditions disappear.

In the second place, so far as we are able to analyse the connection, it would seem to be quite as descriptive of the facts to say that the Family, by the form it takes, *creates* its own economic conditions, as that its form depends upon economic conditions. For instance, the Family in its simplest form, by recognising the dependence of the weak upon the strong, creates the necessity for its responsible head to produce, or in some way provide, more sustenance than is needed for himself alone. This is an economic condition of the very highest importance, and one which no other institution but that of the Family or slavery can ensure.

Again, the organisation of the Family group under one controlling head enables that co-operation in labour which is essential to the successful pursuit of industry. In the absence of a system of wage-labour or of slavery this is again an essential economic condition, and one upon which the development of agriculture, as we have seen, more

especially depended. But it is, I think, impossible to say which position has most truth in it—that the stronger organisation of the Family has enabled and led to the development of agriculture, or that the development of agriculture has determined the form of the Family. Why, for instance, did not the lower insect-catching hunters develop the Patriarchal Family which would have enabled them to carry on agriculture. It was not that they were too much scattered by their way of life (see p. 48), but simply that the same low level of intellect which prevented the woman from taking her proper place in the Family, and prevented the higher organisation of the Family for industrial purposes, also prevented the discovery of agriculture and its pursuit. At the utmost it would seem that all we can say with certainty is, that at an early stage of development we find a particular form of the Family connected with agriculture, but that agriculture has persisted long after that form of the Family has broken down, and that, therefore, the connection is not a permanent or essential one.

One way of stating the relation between the form of the Family and its economic conditions might be to say that the variety of occupations open to the members of a Family determines how far they will be forced by mutual dependence to hold together, and how far able to assert their individual freedom. Or, from another point of view, that the nature of their occupation determines how far they will be *able* to hold together, and how far forced to separate. But then



it must be borne in mind that the variety of occupations itself depends most intimately upon the nature of the Family. Until the village communities broke up and set free a supply of wage-labour, there was no possibility of any great development of industry ; just as there was no possibility of the development of agriculture until the father could control the adult members of his family to co-operate with him.

There is even greater difficulty after our survey in accepting the saying from which we started this chapter, that "a people is what it eats." As a theory of development it breaks down completely as soon as we consider the stage at which we have now arrived. From the point of view of what we eat we are all hunters, all pastors, all agriculturists. It is far more what we *do* which is characteristic of the sort of people we are than what we eat, and of course in the days when occupations are directed almost entirely to the production of food the two points of view tend to coincide. To-day it is no less true that for the great majority of people their energies are directed ultimately towards the procuring of food by means of exchange ; but while every one expects to get much the same kind of food, vast numbers are engaged, as Grosse points out, in work which has nothing to do with actual food production. And when we look for differences of type amongst modern peoples, we find them largely following the lines of occupation ; the coal-miner and the city clerk, the navvy and the shop-assistant, the sailor and the soldier, the tramp and the skilled artisan,

are differentiated in character, habits, and capacities far more by the nature of what they do than by any difference in their food, which at the most is a difference of amount rather than of kind. But however marked these differentiations are, they can hardly be said to have affected the typical form of the Family in any modern community. It is true that the differences between what we may call the family habit of—let us say—the sailor, the tramp, and the city clerk, would be found, I imagine, far more marked than between those of the higher hunters and the herdsman; but the recognised form remains the same for all members of the community, whatever their occupations and habits.

There is one more difficulty which I find in giving pre-eminence to economic conditions as determining the form of the Family. It is the fact that the migratory habits of civilised peoples have shown over and over again, in the past as in the present, that when they are placed under the same economic conditions as tribes of a lower order of development, they do not, at any rate necessarily or even often, adopt the institutions of the aborigines. It may have been the economic conditions of North America which caused the Indians to organise themselves in clans sometimes matriarchal, often maternal; but why, then, have they had no such effect upon the peoples of every nationality which have entered the country since?<sup>1</sup> And Mussulman, Hindoo, and European live

<sup>1</sup> Unless indeed the sociologist will trace some such causal effect in the social predominance of the American woman.

side by side under the same economic conditions in India, and each preserves his own typical family life. And if, like Grosse, we take the meaning of the term "economic conditions" to refer chiefly to a man's occupations—the acts which flow out of him, rather than the food which goes into him—then, as we have seen, the form of the Family is itself one of the principal conditions determining those acts.

Here I must guard myself from misunderstanding, by pointing out that the question whether in any given generation the form of the Family is determined by economic conditions, is not to deny that economic conditions have influenced the development of peoples in the past. It may well be that the American of to-day only fails to organise himself into maternal clans because his inherited constitution has been moulded by long generations of European conditions. We might, indeed, go so far as to admit that any given man is only the summary, the epitome, the concentrated essence of the conditions and surroundings of long lines of ancestors; but that very fact would only make him all the stronger to resist his own immediate surroundings where they failed to harmonise with the past which he represents and the future which he desires. It is a momentary and diffused present against an age-long and concentrated past; and to say that the past will win the day, and mould the present to suit its vision of the future, is only to say that man the spirit is lord over nature.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FAMILY IN RELATION TO PROPERTY

ACCORDING to some authorities the word Family itself *means* property. "The true meaning of *familia* is property; it designates the field, the house, the money, the slaves. . . . As for *oikos*, it clearly presents to the mind no other idea than that of property or domicile."<sup>1</sup> We find a similar identification of ideas in the English use of the term "House" to mean family—the "ruling house"; and the German Haus as meaning Stamm.

But this should not suggest the idea that the use of the word Family to include both living members and property implies that wife and children were the property of the man in the same sense as a house or garden are now private property. We have seen that in many stages of civilisation they actually are so regarded; but the typical patriarchal *familia*, while it included both material and human elements, and though the authority of the Paterfamilias was so great, nevertheless did not belong to him "to do what he liked with." It was only as representing the "*familia*" that he held his authority, and he had

<sup>1</sup> Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, p. 118.

no power to alienate the property from the Family. The members of the Family and the property of the Family were indissolubly connected; and so far as there was any question of "belonging," all belonged alike to the domestic god, or to the Family in the extended sense which included all generations, past and future as well as present. In the succession of generation to generation "it is not the property which passes from one man to another, but the man who passes."<sup>1</sup> Even in our modern use of the possessive case with respect to the Family, it means no more than relationship, and conveys no idea of "possession" in the sense of being able to do what we like with it. A man speaks, no doubt, of "my children," or "my wife," but he speaks also of "my ancestors"; while wife and child themselves speak of "my husband" and "my father." The usage is parallel with our habit of taking as it were into our possession whatever we are habitually busied about or interested in, without any implication of real ownership. A housemaid will say "I have not swept my stairs yet"; a cook will talk of "my kitchen"; a doctor of "my patients"; a hypochondriac of "my indigestion"; while a man less interested in his ailments will be content to suffer indigestion without appropriating it.

Now this connection between a Family and its property, or rather this inclusion of property within the circle of the Family, is one of the most charac-

<sup>1</sup> *La Cité Antique*, p. 78.

teristic features of family life at certain stages of its development; while it is in the varying relations of the different members of the Family to the property of the Family that we find the most striking divergencies in the modern forms of the Family.

It is, for instance, the relation of the Patriarchal Family to its property, quite as much as the authority of the Patriarch, which gives it such a concrete solidarity and strength. Here the power of the "dead hand" is no figure of speech or legal fiction; rather it is the living hand of the dead, maintaining its grip upon the family goods and stretching through the shadowy past to claim its share in the present.<sup>1</sup> Even the unborn generations to come, by their indissoluble connection with the family property, anticipate their life, and are a living force amongst the living. And when ancestor-worship ceases to be a religion, and the dead loosen their hold, when the property ceases to be consecrated to the divine, then its consecration to the human, to the service of those generations of the Family who still live and are to come, may preserve for it much of its steadying and ennobling power. It loses that power and becomes a source of discord and strife, only when the family spirit has vanished, and each member seeks in it his own lesser ends.

Those who have watched the breaking up of the

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious and pathetic relic of this feeling which makes the widow amongst our uneducated people spend the whole of the husband's insurance money in the pomp of funeral, instead of on the maintenance of his children. It "belongs" in her eyes to the dead, and must be expended upon him.



Patriarchal Family as we still find it in certain parts of Europe, cite significant instances of the changes which accompany the dissolution of this relationship between the Family and its property. If we partly follow the terminology used by Le Play, we may describe the true Patriarchal Family as *rigid*; under the pressure of the changing conditions of modern life—as the process is described—this rigidity gives way, becomes pliable, and we get from it two new types of family life:—the *stable* Family, which succeeds in combining change and permanence; and the *unstable*, which fails to maintain its core of strength and permanence, and becomes a mere succession of disconnected individuals with no strength beyond what each possesses in himself. To illustrate this process of disintegration we may turn once more to the Patriarchal Family in Russia, where it is essentially in a transition stage. I will quote first from Le Play's account of the Family in Russia fifty years ago, and then from more recent accounts by Stepniak and Mackenzie Wallace. From Le Play, whose work is too little known, I quote at length, in order to indicate something of his characteristic (though sometimes misinterpreted) view of the influence of family life upon social well-being.

To the reader of this generation, accustomed to hear of nothing from Eastern Europe but "atrocities" and discontent, oppression and revolution, it seems strange to find Le Play exhibiting the inhabitants of Russia, Hungary, and Austria as models of contented prosperity to the restless West. But it must be

remembered, in the first place, that he writes of dwellers in the country and not of dwellers in the towns; in the second place, that he writes of the people who work with their hands and not of the "intellectual" or of the ruling classes; and, finally, that he is writing before the emancipation of 1848 and 1856 had disturbed the relations subsisting between the people and the land on the one hand, and the people and their seigneurs on the other.

The *causes* of this state of contented prosperity he held to be three: (i.) a firm belief in the Divine origin of the moral law, *i.e.* the Decalogue; (ii.) the universally prevailing institution of the Patriarchal Family; and (iii.) an abundance of fertile soil.

It is the second of these causes which concerns us here, and in which indeed Le Play himself is most interested. "The old parents, finding ample means of subsistence in the nature of their locality, are able to gather round them four generations of their own blood. The father of the family, whose power is justified by his long experience, possesses the necessary ascendancy to hold both youth and ripe age in submission to the Decalogue and to custom. Under this régime peace and stability extend from the family to the entire race."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, this organisation of the Family with its submission to the authority of its chief, is reflected into the organisation of the State, and is the school in which submission to the ruler is learned.

"The Russian Family is organised upon bases

<sup>1</sup> *Les Ouvriers Européens*, vol. ii. p. 12.

quite different from those which prevail in the centre and west of Europe. Those who partake of the same blood continue to hold property and goods in common so long as the size of the house permits them to live together. A father generally retains with him several married sons, their wives and children. Even after the death of the father it will often happen that the brothers continue their life in common under the direction of the mother, or of that member of the family who is judged most capable of exercising the functions of chief (Starchi). This combination of three generations prevents the usage of the family name to designate individuals, hence from time immemorial it has been found necessary to call each individual both by his own baptismal name and by that of his father. . . .

“The patriarchal organisation of the family, the security due to the protection of the seigneur, the ample means of subsistence of each family, impresses social relations with a propriety and dignity rarely found at the other extremity of Europe at the same level. Religious fêtes and family anniversaries bring relations and friends frequently together, and then the hospitality exercised is of the freest and most dignified. Several families . . . are attaining by order and economy to a considerable fortune, but this interest never degenerates into sordid avarice nor leads to any neglect of the obligation which every head of a family must fulfil towards his children, his friends, and the community of which he forms part. . . . All the families, with rare exceptions, show



much attachment to established usages. They instinctively repel innovations, even those which would have the best influence upon the state of agriculture and the physical or moral condition of the population. This conservative spirit, as if to compensate its advantages, often degenerates into a blind and obstinate routine.

“So far as concerns the moral side of life, religion, the relations of kindred, solemnities, recreations, and even medical practices, the women show themselves as much attached to custom as the men. On the other hand, in all that concerns dress and food they show a considerable tendency to innovation, so much so that the Starchis consider it their duty to watch them closely in this respect”; one Starchi observed, “with much *finesse* and a profound knowledge of the human heart, that it is always the women who lead man to change the established order.”

“The father or Starchi assigns the work and disposes of the produce, and the members of the family are to him as domestic workers. . . . The children, in every house, brought up amongst many brothers and sisters, know nothing of the isolation which youth often experiences in the West. Their only instruction consists in a few religious ideas imparted by the priest, and they are left free to develop without rendering any services to the family beyond some amount of attention to the animals and the gathering of mushrooms and fruits. At the age of fourteen the boys work both for the family and for the seigneur, while the girls, before marriage, work only for the family.”

“Institutions and manners generally encourage precocious marriage ; that is for boys from seventeen to twenty years, for girls from eighteen to twenty-four years. Owing to the abundance of land at their disposal and the incessant growth of means of subsistence, parents have no anxiety as to the lot of the next generation. For the seigneur, as for every family of peasants, the increase of population is an assured means of prosperity. The interests of the individual are equally served by these youthful marriages. The young women find in their new state an independence and consideration which they lacked before. Under the régime of the numerous community to which they are admitted, they are assisted by the older parents in the cares demanded by the young children ; thus they are less burdened by work than young mothers are in the system of isolation which is coming to prevail more and more in the Western organisation of the family. On his side, a young man of an age to marry occupies an unsatisfactory position in the community, in some respects unendurable ; for instance, it is almost impossible for him to get suitable clothing. His sisters-in-law are naturally occupied in the first instance in looking after the linen and clothes of their husbands ; the prime interest of his young unmarried sisters is the preparation of their trousseau ; the old mother, when still living, is absorbed in superintending family affairs, or in the care of her husband and grandchildren ; she can hardly attend to an adult unmarried son. Thus, even if he were not naturally drawn towards it, he

must seek in marriage the way out of a false position, and thus lighten the charge he inflicts upon other members of the community.

“The comfort and well-being of the family depend essentially upon the ancient organisation by which three or four young households live in common; and this state of things itself can only be maintained in a society which confers absolute authority upon the chief of the family. Hence the keystone of the social system of Russia is patriarchal authority, which both customs and institutions tend to maintain.

“The patriarchal régime harmonises well in Russia with other influences; in a social order where school education contributes in no way to the precocious development of youth, where knowledge is acquired only by the practice of life and of social relations, the old men actually have an enormous superiority over the young. The latter are conscious of their inferiority, and when in Russia one asks a man of forty about some fact, he never fails to answer that such information can only be properly given by some one older. The régime is confirmed, moreover, by religious sentiment; thus it is almost unknown that a son should make up his mind to an act of formal disobedience, and so incur the paternal malediction. In the comparatively rare cases where the ascendancy of the father is insufficient to maintain the harmony necessary to the common life, when more especially the dissensions arising amongst his daughters-in-law threaten to



provoke the dispersion of the family, the father has recourse to the authority of the seigneur. In fact, the permission of the latter is necessary in principle when there is occasion to divide a family; it is equally necessary in practice in the sense that the construction of a new habitation can only take place by means of dispensations from work and allocations of material on the part of the seigneur. Such recourse to the seigneur is rare in the land of Tachli; but when it does occur, he himself appeals to an assembly composed of all the elders of the village to which the family belongs; experience has taught him that the most useful plan in such a case is to decide according to the opinion of this council.

“At the death of the father of the family his authority passes, the seigneur approving, to that one of his brothers or sons whom he has nominated or whom the family itself has chosen. This approval of the seigneur is no source of conflict, for the interest of the seigneur and that of the whole family coincide in assigning the authority to the member most capable of exercising it. The same influences and interests come into play when the growth of the family no longer admits of their living together, when it becomes necessary to create a new home, and to assign to the new branch a share in the animals, furniture, and goods in general acquired by the community.

“The social system of which we have here sketched the principal features consists then essentially in the triple subordination of the individual to

the family, to the communal council, and to the seigneur. Eminent individuals, who in the social systems of the West work mainly for their own elevation, in the Russian system must devote themselves to the well-being of members of the family who are less happily endowed, to the prosperity of their commune, to the splendour of the seignorial house, finding in case of misfortune, or declining age, support and assistance in the three groups of collective interests which they have served since youth. Briefly, under this régime social forces contribute more to stability than to progress.

“The advantages of this system are more pronounced where individuals have little strength of their own. . . . They will diminish, and those which are proper to the Western system will increase in proportion as the refinement of religious sentiment and the rational progress of the means of education assure to young people that power over themselves, that knowledge and power of initiative, which under the present régime can only be acquired by men of advanced age.”<sup>1</sup>

This, then, is a picture of the Patriarchal organisation at its best, as seen by a sympathiser and admirer. Stepniak in his book on the *Russian Peasantry*, writing a generation later, when the influences foreseen by Le Play have become increasingly prominent, throws a somewhat different light upon it. No doubt the autocratic power of the Patriarch might often

<sup>1</sup> *Les Ouvriers Européens*, vol. ii. pp. 51 sq.

degenerate into a tyranny which would be resented by the younger members of the Family, and would tend wherever these saw their way to independence to the breaking up of the system ; and it is this side of the life which modern conditions tend to make increasingly prominent.

“ Something harsh, cruel, cynically egotistical, is worming itself into the hearts of the Russian agricultural population, where formerly all was simplicity, peace and goodwill unto men. Thus the grey-bearded grandfathers are not alone in modern Russia in lamenting the good old times. Some of our young and popular writers are, strangely enough, striking the same wailing chords. It is evident that in the terrible straits through which our people are passing, not only their material condition, but their very souls have suffered grave injuries. Yet it is not all lamentation about the past in the tidings which reach us from our villages. The good produced by the progress of culture is, in spite of its drawbacks, according to our modest opinion, full compensation for the impairing of the almost unconscious virtues of the old patriarchal period. Freed from the yoke of serfdom, and put before the tribunals on an equal footing with other citizens, a new generation, which has not known slavery, has had time to grow up. Their aspiration after independence has not yet directed itself against political despotism, save in isolated cases ; but in the meantime it has almost triumphed in the struggle against the more intimate and trying domestic despotism of the *bolshak*, the head



of the household. A very important and thorough-going change has taken place in the family relations of the great Russian rural population. The children, as soon as they have grown up and have married, will no longer submit to the *bolshak's* whimsical rule. They rebel, and if imposed upon, separate and form new households, where they become masters of their own actions. These separations have grown so frequent that the number of independent households in the period from 1858-1881 increased from 32 per cent to 71 per cent of the whole provincial population. It is worthy of remark that the rebellion among the educated classes also first began in the circle of domestic life, before stepping into the larger arena of political action."

We may imagine that if Le Play had lived to read of this domestic rebellion he would hardly have failed to connect with it the "something harsh, cruel, and cynically egotistical" which Stepniak himself deprecates in the Russian peasantry of to-day.<sup>1</sup> Nor would he have been slow to find one of its causes in the spread of education which he foresaw.

"Elementary education, however hampered and obstructed by the Government, is spreading amongst the rural classes. In 1868, of a hundred recruits of peasant origin there were only eight who could read and write. In 1882 the proportion of literate people among the same number was twenty. This is little compared with what might have been done, but it is a great success if we remember the hindrances the

<sup>1</sup> Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry*.

peasant has had to overcome. Reading, which a score of years ago was confined exclusively to the upper classes, is now spreading among the *moujiks*. Popular literature of all kinds has received an unprecedented development in the last ten or fifteen years. Popular books run through dozens of editions, and are selling by scores of thousands of copies.”<sup>1</sup>

Economic causes are fighting both for and against the maintenance of the family organisation in Russia. On the one hand, it is not only the growing desire for independence which tempts the adult worker to seek his fortunes apart from those of his Family; the pressure of taxation makes it absolutely necessary that some of the Family should become wage-earners in the towns or elsewhere, if enough of the produce of the homestead is to be preserved for the maintenance of the Family; and the wage-earner who has learned to live under his own guidance and to feel the means of independence within his hands, becomes more and more disinclined to submit himself again to the patriarchal rule, though he may continue for a time to contribute to the family income.

On the other hand, it is the large organised Families which can best withstand the pressure of increasing poverty: “Only very large families, which are becoming less common, are able to extricate themselves from the usurer’s net in which they have been by dire misfortune entangled. When the liability is divided amongst twelve or more adults this may compensate for the absence of one or two

<sup>1</sup> Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry*.

of their number 'given in bondage' by increased diligence on the part of those that remain. But small families almost inevitably succumb."<sup>1</sup>

This function of the patriarchal organisation as a defence, both of the Families themselves in times of distress and weakness, and of the weaker members who are unfit to stand alone, was one to which Le Play attached great importance; and it seems likely that its dissolution will lead to a great increase of the numbers of those in the community who are permanently poverty-stricken. Nevertheless, Stepniak at least considers it to be doomed: "The vigour of the big patriarchal families is sapped by the lowest instincts as well as by the loftiest aspirations developed by modern times. They are incompatible with individual independence. Amongst the southern Russians, with whom the sentiment of individuality is much stronger than amongst the great Russians, these composite households are unknown. Their rapid dissolution among the Russians would have been an unmitigated good if it were not accompanied by the general relaxation of social ties between all the members of the village community."<sup>2</sup>

Mackenzie Wallace gives a similar account of the mingled good and evil attending the dissolution of the Patriarchal Family in his book on *Russia*: "Russian peasants are human beings like ourselves. . . . And those of them who live in large families are subjected to a kind of probation which most of us have never dreamed of. The families

<sup>1</sup> *The Russian Peasantry*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



comprising a large household not only live together, but have nearly all things in common. Each member works, not for himself, but for the household, and all that he earns is expected to go into the family treasury. The arrangement almost inevitably leads to one of two results—either there are continual dissensions, or order is preserved by a powerful domestic tyranny.<sup>1</sup> It is quite natural, therefore, that when the authority of the landed proprietors was abolished in 1861, the large peasant families almost all crumbled to pieces. The arbitrary rule of the Khozain was based on, and maintained by, the arbitrary rule of the proprietor, and both naturally fell together. Households like that of our friend Ivan were preserved only in exceptional cases, when the Head of the House happened to possess an unusual amount of moral influence over the other members.

“The change has unquestionably had a prejudicial influence on the material welfare of the peasantry, but it must have added considerably to their domestic comfort, and may perhaps produce good moral results. For the present, however, the evil consequences are by far the most prominent. Every married peasant strives to have a house of his own, and many of them, in order to defray the necessary expenses, have been obliged to incur debts.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a different view of life in a large family, cf. Demolins in *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, p. 12: “Du moment qu'on peut travailler et posséder en commun, on vit en commun, parcequ'il est plus facile, plus agréable et plus économique de rester réunis que de se séparer.”

<sup>2</sup> *Russia*, p. 123.

Again: "In the time of serfage the peasant families, as I have already remarked, were usually very large. They remained undivided, partly from the influence of patriarchal conceptions, but chiefly because the proprietors, recognising the advantage of large units, prevented them from breaking up. As soon as the proprietor's authority was removed, the process of disintegration began, and spread rapidly. Every one wished to be independent, and in a very short time nearly every able-bodied married peasant had a house of his own. The economic consequences were disastrous. A large amount of money had to be expended in constructing new houses and farm steadings; and the old habit of one male member remaining at home to cultivate the land allotment with the female members of the family, whilst the others went to earn wages elsewhere, had to be abandoned. Many large families, which had been prosperous and comfortable—rich according to peasant conceptions—dissolved into three or four small ones, all on the brink of pauperism."<sup>1</sup>

Even if it should prove that in Russia the Patriarchal Family is doomed by the restriction of the people's land and the weight of taxation, there are other countries where it still flourishes and preserves the ancient relation between the Family and its property. The following account of the Family community in Servia is quoted from the Report of the First International Co-operative Congress, 1895:—

<sup>1</sup> *Russia*, vol. ii. p. 221.

“First comes our *Zadroura*, or family community, which greatly resembles the *Sociedade familias* of Portugal, or the *Compania gallegas* of Spain. It is really that ancient type, the rural family founded upon relationship or adoption, and having for its aim a community of life and property. The *zadroura* is a big family, whose members (brothers, cousins, or more distant relatives, with their wives and children) are united by bonds of relationship, marriage, and adoption. The management of the community is confided to the oldest member, who is considered the head of the family, and all the others owe him respect and obedience. His authority is extensive, but constitutional and fatherly. He derives his authority from the love springing from blood relationship, from gratitude for his fatherly care, and from the respect due to old age and experience. In exceptional cases, when the oldest member is a spendthrift, idle and incapable, so that he is ruining the community—a case which is of very rare occurrence—the ancient customs are departed from, and all the members of the *zadroura* together choose their head chief from among themselves.

“All the property of the *zadroura* belongs in common to all its members of both sexes, so long as they remain in the community. The head cannot dispose of the patrimony of the community without the consent of its members. This state of things has been preserved also by the Servian civil code, compiled in 1844, which contains an interesting chapter upon *zadrouras* (v. articles 507 to 530).



“The zadrouga engages in all kinds of work—it is a sort of association for production and for distribution in one. Only those things are brought from outside which the community is unable to produce, such as iron implements, machines, certain utensils, and that is almost all. Everything else is produced by the community—provisions, clothing, boots and shoes, bedding, wooden utensils, outbuildings and dwellings, etc. Each member of the community has to perform the work appointed him. The whole community deliberates on its operations—all assembled together, men, women, and even the paid servants, if there are any.

“It is individual capacity, age and sex, which determine the work of each one. The children, or if there are none, the women (those who are not strong enough for heavy work) tend the flocks. Work in the fields and vineyards is executed by members of both sexes indifferently, but the men alone, as being the strongest, plough, dig, mow, and cut wood, whilst the women generally look after the house-work, the making of clothes, and other indoor work. The men also attend to the sale of produce.

“The head of the zadrouga represents the community in its relations with the state or the parish. The distribution of labour depends on the season, the amount of work to be done, and the number of workers. For it to be well arranged, good sense, honesty, and especially justice, suffice. In general, the part played by the head of the community is of less importance from an economic point of view than from that of his moral authority.

“The zadrouga had its origin in the most remote past of the Slav people. They lived grouped in families, which composed the villages, and collective property belonging to the whole group alone was known. They worked in common the soil which they owned in common.

“The common ownership of the zadrouga rests on the same principle as the ownership of parish property. In each family community the soil and all the movable things, consisting of instruments of labour, such as ploughs, cattle, carts, etc., belong to all in common. No member of the community can encumber the common property, and still less mortgage it or alienate it, or even his own share of it. If a member leaves the community he loses all his rights of co-proprietorship in it, and in order to re-acquire them he must re-enter the community. This provision is very logical, for a member who leaves a community to establish himself on his own account ceases from that moment to be productive for the community. The consent of all the members is required to encumber or alienate the property of the community, or dispose of it in any way. When a community becomes too numerous, or some other reason arises, it may be divided, subject to several conditions, the principal one being the consent of all those interested who are of full age, and then, but then only, each member becomes owner of the share falling to his due.

“All income and individual acquisitions are paid into the common fund, and all the members are co-proprietors equally, and have the same rights of

enjoyment. Each one has his share in the general income, and this share is allotted according to necessities, and not according to individual efforts. When a member marries, it is the community which bears all the wedding expenses.

“Should a community be divided, the landed property is shared amongst the men; the women do not share in the division. In the Servian rural family the female sex is subordinate to the male, a fact specially noticeable when a division takes place. When a young woman marries she only receives gifts and presents from the movable property. What she brings as a dowry is not considered common property; the idea of common property is opposed to it. Such is the organisation of the Servian Zadrouga, which had, and still has, great influence on the economic development of Servia.”

It is interesting to note here that Stepniak considers that in Russia the Patriarchal Family as an *industrial* unit will be replaced by voluntary co-operation amongst adults for the purpose of carrying out any piece of work: “There exists no people . . . who, as a body, are so well trained for collective labour as our moujiks are. Whenever a group or a crowd of them have some common economical interest to look after, or some common work to perform, they invariably form themselves into an *artel*, or kind of trades union, which is a free, purely economical *mir*, purged of the compulsory despotic elements of political authority. It is a free union of people who combine



for the mutual advantages of co-operation in labour, or consumption, or of both. Its membership is voluntary, not imposed, and each member is free to withdraw at the close of the season, or upon the conclusion of the particular work for which the *artel* was formed, and to enter into a new *artel*. Quarrels between members, as well as offences against the *artel*, if not settled in an amicable manner, have to be brought before the common tribunals. The *artel* has no legal authority over its members. Expulsion from the *artel* is the only punishment, or rather the only protection, these associations possess against those who break their rules. Yet the *artels* do very well, and in permanent work often prove to be life-long partnerships. . . . The principle of co-operation is applied as frequently and naturally to agricultural as to non-agricultural work. Of late years co-operation in agriculture has become even more varied and more extensive than ever before, partly because of the impoverishment of the people, and especially because of the wholesale breaking-down throughout Russia of the big patriarchal families. So long as they existed they formed compulsory co-operative associations, and were held together by family despotism. Now they are supplanted by free associations or self-electing *artels*.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems probable that Stepniak has here over-rated the importance of the *artel* as a factor in Russian industry. According to later authorities,<sup>2</sup> these associations are as yet of comparatively small

<sup>1</sup> Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry*, p. 635.

<sup>2</sup> See Report of the International Co-operative Society, Manchester.

importance, are formed only for temporary purposes, and are applicable only to agricultural operations of the simplest nature, such as tree-felling. But even if it were decisively shown that the Patriarchal Family could profitably be replaced by other organisations for the purpose of carrying on any given piece of work, there remains the further question as to the extent to which such organisations can provide for all members of the community, and as to the value of the type of human being actually produced by it. The long discipline and close co-operation essential to the common life in large family groups cannot fail to have a very marked effect upon the character of those who share that life; and this is a consideration at least as important as that of its relation to economic production. Indeed, the two questions are inextricably mixed up together, for economic production depends quite as much upon individual efficiency as upon organisation, and individual efficiency is almost entirely a question of individual training and character. There can be little doubt that the present capacity of the Russians to form themselves into bodies of co-operative producers is derived from their long discipline in family life; they and their ancestors from time immemorial have learned to subordinate their particular interests and to work together for the common good. But one point which strikes us at once is this: that whereas the family group, settled upon its own land which affords a variety of work suited to all capacities, includes weakly and inefficient members who yield what services they can, and are partly provided for

by the strong, the new and voluntary industrial group will include none but the efficient and able-bodied, while the weakly will tend to fall out altogether.

It was more from this point of view of character and mutual support—what we may perhaps call the social point of view—that Le Play carried on his studies of family life in various parts of Europe and under various conditions. The main part of his writing centres round the middle of last century, though his observations had extended over many years previously. He was led to this particular branch of investigation by his keen desire to find some remedy for the distressed restlessness of the French people which he saw around him. To find a remedy he knew that one must seek a cause; and to him it was clear that the cause was only to be found by penetrating deeply into the lives of the people themselves. Hence his prolonged studies of typical Families in many widely separated districts of Europe, covering their social and physical surroundings, their degree of material prosperity, their way of work and life, and the customs or laws regulating family relations. His long years of labour left him firmly convinced that one essential factor in the prosperity and content of a people is a good organisation of the Family; and the greater part of his voluminous writings is devoted to recording observations as to the effect upon family life of such things as the laws of bequest and inheritance in France, the laws against early marriages in Germany, the Calvinistic religion



in Geneva, the organisation of industry in England, and so on.

What is a good organisation of the Family? I have already mentioned the three types noted by Le Play, and illustrated by him in his monographs. There is first the Patriarchal Family which we have been considering; this is essentially Eastern in character, it is ruled by tradition and averse to all change. Next to this, and approximating to it in many of its characteristics, is the *famille-souche*, of which I shall speak next; the main characteristics of it are that it is attached to its home, but combines fidelity to tradition with a considerable capacity for change. In its typical form continuity is secured by one of the children becoming definitely heir to the father's possessions and authority, while the others leave home to seek their fortunes, provided with a dower. But the essential features are the authority and continuity which secure the welfare of *all* the members of the Family.

Finally, there is the unstable Family, of which the members care little for home, and are eager only for change. It is formed by the marriage of the parents, increased by the birth of the children, diminishes again as these leave home, and is finally dissolved by the death of the parents. There is no continuity or authority, and little, if any, assurance of the well-being of its various members. These unstable Families Le Play finds in all the poorest and most distressed regions which he visits; each generation as it reaches economic independence breaks away from the preceding

one, and each member of a generation from its fellow-members ; the father has little or no authority, and the children drift out into the world undisciplined and untrained. Such Families neither secure the well-being of individuals nor contribute anything to the prosperity of the community. We are only too familiar with them to-day, and shall have more to say of them later on. They are indeed at the root of most of our social difficulties. They are like baskets with holes in them ; they let the old people drop out at one end, and the children at the other, to be picked up by the State, or take their chance of passing charity. And not infrequently the basket falls to pieces altogether, and the whole Family has to be sorted out into work-houses, asylums, and prisons.

But the Families of various degrees of stability are still infinitely more numerous all over the world, and the nature and source of their strength must be studied, before we can properly understand the causes of their change and failure.

We have seen the admiration felt by Le Play for the Patriarchal Family of the East ; much that he writes leads one to think that he considered the type of society founded upon it to be that which really conduced most to the happiness of the human race. But he recognised that without modification it was incompatible with the movement of the world which we know as progress ; that it could neither stand before modern ideals of education and personal liberty, nor yet contribute its share towards the further subjugation of Nature in the interests of humanity ; and

he fixed upon the second form, that of the stable Family, or *famille-souche*, as combining the best features of the new and the old. The most characteristic form of this he finds amongst the French peasant proprietors of the older type. Here the family life centres round the homestead from generation to generation, carrying with it not only the authority of the head of the Family, but also the weighty responsibility of providing for the welfare of the other members. Children are numerous, and each generation consists of from eight to ten members; those who marry or leave the home to seek their fortunes elsewhere are provided with a "portion," those who prefer it stay on in the old home, partaking in the work of the farm, and sharing the family fortunes for good or for evil. In such a home may be found brothers and sisters of three generations, submitting themselves to the authority of the chief, and forming under his guidance an independent industrial community. The advantages of the system are enumerated by Le Play as follows. The children are brought up under the most favourable conditions, are carefully disciplined and educated, and are not expected to take any serious part in the work of the community until the age of fifteen. The family home secures a happy life to such of its members as from any physical or intellectual failing cannot prosper as heads of Families themselves; it is an asylum always open to those who fail in their enterprises, especially for the invalided soldier. It secures an honourable position for aged relatives and other infirm members



of the communities. It is constantly sending out into the world offshoots trained to work and obedience, and provided with a small capital, from whom recruits can be drawn for industry, for the army and navy, and for the colonies. And finally, the elders of the Family, practised in the difficult art of ruling a small community, form the best possible material for the institutions of local government. Thus the Family presents itself as the medium by which public interest is combined with private welfare.

Without for the present expressing an opinion as to how far this *famille-souche* is indispensable to social welfare, it is interesting to note in passing how many of our "social problems" of to-day are obviated by it, in so far as Le Play's estimate is a correct one. Old age pensions are unnecessary where the stable Family combines young and old in one strong bond of mutual helpfulness. A proletariat residuum is impossible where all the young people who go out into the world are trained to habits of labour and obedience, as well as being strong and capable; the natural asylum of the home for the mentally and physically feeble is a far surer precaution against the marriage and propagation of the unfit than any recognised system of public control; while the firmly rooted belief that family life involves a home and property, however humble, prohibits the thriftless marriages which lead to pauperism.

If now we ask what factors are essential to an effective Family of this type, we find that is based,

according to Le Play, upon two in particular—sufficient private property to ensure the occupation and maintenance of the Family, and the authority of the father, which enables him not only to handle the property so as to conduce to the best interests of the Family, but also to control and direct his children until they have learned to guide their own lives and are fitted to fulfil their duties. Now this authority, Le Play considers, can only be firmly established where the father has free control over the family property, not only during his lifetime, but at death also—where, that is, there is freedom of bequest. Only so can he ensure that the property will be maintained intact for the future support of the Family, and only so can he uphold his supremacy over his children through their fear of being disinherited.

In this relation of the Family to its property we come upon one of the most important influences determining family life, acting both through internal custom and through the external intervention of the State. There is no point at which the State has so persistently and so effectively, for good or for evil, intervened in family matters as on this question of the transmission of property. Time and again legislation has been passed, and annulled and repassed, in favour of equal partition, of freedom of bequest, of primogeniture, as one or the other system has been thought desirable, either in the interests of a particular class, or in the interests of the nation as a whole. And wherever legislation has been so far effective as

to modify the custom of a people with respect to the inheritance of property, it has also left a deep and lasting mark upon the organisation and influence of the Family in other ways than that of inheritance itself.



## CHAPTER V

### THE FAMILY AND THE STATE

THE direct influence of the State upon the Family through its marriage laws is so simple, and changes so slowly, as to leave little to be said ; but it has other less obvious ways of making its influence felt. In this chapter we are concerned with the indirect influence which it has exercised by legislation affecting the family property and its transmission from one generation to another.

Before proceeding to describe some of the more important interventions of the State in this respect, I will indicate an interesting feature about the theories upon which such interventions are sometimes based. I have already pointed out that in one of the oldest conceptions of the Family known to us the property is considered as inalienable from it, and as belonging to the whole Family as such, the Head of the Family being merely the user for the time being. And not only is his use of it temporary, but in so far as it belongs to all members of the Family his use of it is not for his benefit alone, but for theirs also. This belief that the patrimony belongs to the Family is to be found amongst many peoples at many stages of

development, and the modern French law of equal partition is explicitly based upon it. It is based, that is, upon the assumption that the father has no right to exclude any member of the Family from his due share in the family property, and that in the interests of justice the State must, if necessary, intervene to prevent his doing so. But the same view of the relation of the Family to its property may lead to an entirely opposite theory of inheritance. Le Play, for instance, pleaded keenly against the law of enforced partition, and in favour of freedom of bequest; but he based his plea not upon the crude dogma that "a man may do what he likes with his own," but upon the ground that the father's power to choose his successor is in the best interests of the Family as a whole. And from the point of view of the choice of the best successor to carry on the family business, there is no doubt that freedom of bequest comes far nearer to the old tradition of the Family and its property than does a compulsory partition. Primogeniture itself, in so far as it is merely customary, is due mainly to the fact that, other things being equal, the oldest son would also be the strongest and most experienced, and therefore the best fitted to manage the affairs of the Family.

Now these two theories of the relation of the Family to its property run through the whole history of the people in relation to the land. On the one hand, we have the view that the interests of the Family are best served when its property is held and administered by the strongest member on behalf of

the others; the view, that is, which considers the Family as a whole with inseparable interests. On the other hand, there is the view which holds that the interests of each member of the Family are largely independent of the interests of other members, and can only be properly safeguarded by a division of the family property, which puts his share under his separate and complete control. We find a similar antithesis in the different theories as to a nation and its property; there are some who hold that it is well that the property of a people, and more especially its land, should rest in the hands of those who can best administer it in the interests of the whole people; while others maintain that this trust is certain to be abused, and that the only safeguard is a division which will give each individual the direct control over his own share, no matter whether he is competent to administer it or not.

With the wider question, which to some extent coincides with the question of aristocracy *v.* democracy, we are not directly concerned here, though, as we shall see, it has been largely influential in determining the attitude of the State in various countries towards questions of family organisation and inheritance. But in reference to the no less important relation of the Family to its property, it must be noted that neither view can claim to meet all the needs of the case, nor to ensure the welfare of all members of the Family. On the one hand, not only must there be taken into account the innumerable cases in which the "Head of the Family" thinks more of his rights



than his responsibilities, and becomes a petty tyrant ;<sup>1</sup> but also it must be borne in mind in how many times and places the view that the family property must be administered by one in the interests of all, has degenerated into the commonplace view of Primogeniture that the property *belongs* to one alone, and is to be administered by him purely in his own interest—a degeneration which may give rise to a proletariat class, a people without property, as surely as the opposite view. For, on the other hand, and as we have noted already, under a theory which regards the different members of a Family as having hostile interests, and accepts “division” as the only means of securing justice, it is inevitable that some at least of the weakly and incompetent will succumb in the struggle ; that they will prove unequal to the task of administering their “share,” and that here again we shall get a helplessly poverty-stricken class perpetuating itself in the community.

One more point remains to be noted before passing to actual history. In speaking of primogeniture and equal division of property amongst the children, it must be borne in mind that we are not dealing with two simple and opposed systems, but that either form of inheritance may be encouraged, or the reverse, by the State and by custom in very various degrees. There may be absolute freedom of bequest so far as the law is concerned, in which case it will be mainly a matter of local custom what system prevails. It may be the eldest son who is preferred, or it may be

<sup>1</sup> See Stepniak as quoted above, p. 84.

the youngest, or it may be the eldest daughter ; or, again, it may be that the system of equal division is customary. Finally, it may be the very frequent compromise by which the property devolves upon the eldest son as representative of the other members of the Family.

When the State does intervene, the mildest form of intervention is in the case of intestacy, *i.e.* where the father dies without a formal and recognised statement of his will. Then the law may prescribe either that the whole or principal share falls to the eldest son, or that the property is divided, according to which theory of inheritance is upheld by the State. At first sight the amount of interference involved in this may seem to be insignificant and not likely to have any effect upon the actual course of inheritance, for if the passing owner does not acquiesce in the ruling of the law, he has only to make a will in order to avoid it. But in reality such a law proves to have very considerable influence upon the actual course of inheritance, and legislators are able to rely with some confidence upon it as an instrument for bringing about the state of things they desire. There are two main reasons for this. In the first place, where custom is strong, as in most agricultural countries, the disinclination to make a will is often strong also ; and the expectation that the property will continue to descend in the Family in the same way as for countless generations takes long to break down, even in the face of contrary legislation. And in the second place, where custom is weaker, the action of

those who do make wills can hardly fail to be affected by the attitude of the State. If the law assigns the property to the eldest son, then to make a will depriving him of his pre-eminence is so far a slight upon him and an injury to his expectations; while if the law prescribes equal division, then to leave the property to one is to incur the blame of showing favouritism towards one at the expense of the others. In short, whichever course the State favours, it emphasises the aspect of injustice involved in the other course, and so exerts a steady pressure in the desired direction.

But the State may go much further in its intervention than by merely distributing the property of the man who has made no will. It may limit his freedom of bequest to any extent and in any direction, from enacting that the property must go to the eldest son, as in feudal times, to insisting upon division, as in France of to-day. And if now we turn to consider the actual history of a few such instances of intervention, we shall do well to begin with France, for the French peasant-proprietor, in his relation to the land, has long been held up as an object-lesson to social students. The story as generally told and accepted has been subject to revision of late years, but in its familiar form it runs somewhat as follows: Before the French Revolution custom and law had encouraged a system of inheritance under which estates, both large and small, tended to be preserved intact and were passed on from generation to generation in the same



Families. Amongst the noble or wealthy this was effected by a system of primogeniture and entail; amongst the smaller proprietors by the custom of the *famille-souche*, as described above. This state of affairs was reversed after the Revolution by the laws enforcing a partition of the family property amongst all the children of the Family. The evil results of this are stated to have been twofold; on the one hand, the over-division of the land (*morecellement*) into portions too small to afford a subsistence to the owners, leading to a poverty-stricken peasantry and a retrograde state of agriculture; on the other hand, and in order to avoid the first evil, the deliberate limitation of the peasant-family which has led to the stationary condition of the French population.

This view has been subjected to searching criticism by Lujo Brentano in his book on *Erbrechtspolitik*. His two main contentions are, in the first place, that the new laws merely confirmed a procedure which was previously customary amongst by far the greater part of the people, and, in the second place, that the evil results so freely predicted and asserted are not borne out by the facts.

What was the actual state of affairs before the Revolution? So far as legislation was concerned we find a law of intestacy which distinguishes between two kinds of property, noble and not noble, and prescribes that noble land shall descend by primogeniture to the eldest son, while not noble land is subject at the death of the owner to equal division. Brentano estimates that three-quarters of the land in

France was thus already subject to equal division, and only one quarter to primogeniture.

This does not of course imply that inheritance actually took place in these proportions. The law applying only in case of intestacy, freedom of bequest remained intact and was exercised mainly in accordance with local customs. These customs varied greatly in different parts of the country. In the South of France the preference of the eldest born was common; but for the most part the preference was probably of the kind so strongly advocated by Le Play, which made the heir the representative of the Family acting in its interests, rather than the preference of primogeniture.<sup>1</sup>

In the middle and northern provinces many and various customs were in force, which differed for noble and non-noble estates, for movable and immovable property, for inherited and acquired property. But behind all the different customs was the law of intestacy exerting a steady pressure in favour of equal division of the greater part of the land; so that the French people were thoroughly habituated to the idea, if not to the practice, long before the change which followed upon the Revolution.

The *preference* of the eldest-born as a matter of custom differs of course essentially from the *right* of the eldest-born, which constitutes primogeniture in the fullest sense, and as it was embodied in the feudal system. But both as customary and as legal it has behind it a long history of policy and statecraft;

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, *Erbrechtspolitik*, pp. 2 sq.

a history which is essentially a history of the Family in its relation to the State. The desire of States to strengthen themselves by founding great Families, and then to break down the overweening power of the great Families they have fostered, has led in most countries at one time or another to legislative interference with family customs; while the counter desire of the great Families to maintain their strength against attacks by the State has been one of the most fruitful sources of devices for keeping the Family and its property intact.

The most striking, and probably the first, utilisation of a compulsory system of Primogeniture to strengthen the State, was when it was introduced into England by the Normans in connection with the feudal system. "Before that time Primogeniture was unknown to the English, as to other German peoples; but the need of a strong organisation against the conquered Saxons led the King to assign the feudal lands in such a way that they could only be inherited undivided. As the Family receiving the fief was represented by its eldest member, he was delegated by the Family to take it over; and out of this function of the eldest as principal administrator of the family estate there grew up an exclusive right, that of primogeniture. Thus inheritance by Primogeniture came from Normandy to England, was further developed upon English soil, then reacted upon France, until it became the regular system peculiar to feudal property."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 4.



It was in this way that the sovereigns gathered around them a body of wealthy and noble Families, eager to preserve the existing order, and able by their wealth and strength to provide fighting men and money in time of war. And for the Families themselves, especially in a hostile land, a system which preserved the property intact under the firm rule of the eldest born, was probably the strongest form of organisation.

Then came the time when the great Families became too strong for the safety of the monarchs, and the aim of the latter became to break down by executions and confiscations the power of the organisation which they had built up. To meet this danger the Families strengthened themselves still further by using the devices of "fideicommissae" and entails. The sovereign might indeed execute the head of the family if he could get hold of him, but could not confiscate his property if it had only been held by him in trust for future generations. And while the property remained in the hands of the Family, its power would be at best but checked for one generation by the loss of its chief.

The history of these devices for keeping the connection between the Family and its property unbroken, for guarding it in times of civil strife against confiscation, and in more modern times against the wastefulness of any particular representative, is a long and complicated one. Curiously enough, though in their later developments they have operated entirely to the exclusion of female heirs, they seem to have

had their origin in attempts to frustrate the Roman law against inheritance by women. A testator desirous of leaving his property to a woman, and prevented by the Roman law from doing so directly, would attain his end by making a will nominally in favour of some person capable of inheriting, who then became in the eyes of the law the only heir and proprietor. But a request would be added to the will that the nominal heir (*fiduciarius*) should transfer the property to the person who was incapable of inheriting direct (*fideicommissarius*). Sometimes the heir would fulfil the trust, sometimes not; and abuses of trust in time became frequent to such an extent that the law was gradually brought, first to recognise the trusts and then to protect them.

Sometimes the property would be left to the fiduciary heir for life, under condition of passing it on to a certain specified person or persons at his death; and it was this form of trust, known as "substitution," which the French people utilised to create perpetual entails.<sup>1</sup> Combining the system with that of primogeniture, the founder of such an entail would leave his property to the eldest male of all future generations. "The nobles, who were in constant danger of trial for high treason, made use of *fideicommissae*, to preserve at least their property to their family in case they should be condemned. But it was just this security against confiscation which made the crown see in the *fideicommissae* a

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 12.

check to the royal power.”<sup>1</sup> Hence at the rise of the absolute monarchy we find the Crown resolutely opposing them, and finally legislating against their permanency. In France the validity of such entails was limited in 1560 to two generations.

When the power of the Crown was firmly established its attitude changed again, and it once more encouraged the great Families, which by their wealth and magnificence added so much to the splendour of the Court. Then the desire to “found Families” by means of entails seems to have spread through all classes of society; for in 1629 it was found necessary to prohibit them to *personnes rustiques*, a term afterwards interpreted to mean peasant proprietors and agricultural labourers, but not tradespeople nor artisans in the towns.

Then came the time when it was evident that the *fideicommissae* were becoming the occasion of great social evils. In the eighteenth century not only did their excessive multiplication give rise to incessant litigation; but it often happened that the very families for whose preservation they had been instituted were ruined by the inability of the life-owner to deal freely with the land. Thus the time was ripe for their abolition; a process which began with the Revolution and terminated in the *Code Civil*.

The principle of the *Code Civil* is the free divisibility of land by the living as well as at death. The possessor is free to buy or sell as he likes, and if he has no descendants he can dispose of his property

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 12.



freely by will. If he *has* descendants, then in the case of intestacy the law ensures absolutely equal division between all the children, male and female ; but if the possessor choose to make a will, then he may dispose freely of a part only of the property, the rest must be divided amongst the members of the family. This free part varies in amount with the number of children : if he has only one child, then that child must inherit half, and the father may leave the other half as he will ; if he has two children, then he may dispose freely of one-third ; if three or more children, then of one-fourth only. Thus if he wishes to “make an eldest son,” he can do it only to the limited extent of adding the free share to the portion of the eldest son. From this point of view, therefore, the Revolution was the victory of the “younger sons” ; and it is a strange paradox that their victory has largely resulted in making a nation of “only sons,” with all the weakening privileges and none of the strengthening responsibilities of the true “eldest son.”

In these provisions of the *Code Civil* as to inheritance Brentano finds a recognition of the true relation of the Family to its property : “like the ancient law, the Code regards children and grandchildren as persons who, even during the life of the testator, are *quasi* co-proprietors of his possessions. . . . It is based upon the fundamental idea that the inheritance is family property, and therefore no member must be deprived of his full share . . . hence its careful exclusion of primogeniture, *i.e.* the robbing

of the majority of the Family for the benefit of one.”<sup>1</sup>

Against Montesquieu's argument that children have no natural right to succeed to the property of their father, who is absolute owner, he replies :<sup>2</sup> “But originally the father was never this. The original economic unit was never the individual, but the house: the father was only the director and representative of the community, while even during his lifetime the children, or at least the sons, were co-proprietors in the property of the household, the Family. Greek custom regarded the house-father only as the natural guardian and administrator of the common property, and the succession of heirs amongst the Romans is described by the jurist Paulus as not strictly inheritance, but as a development of their relation to the property; by succession they only received the free control over that which they already possessed as co-proprietors during the father's life. But in France it was not only in the beginning, as everywhere else, that Families were the economic units. Troplong writes of the Middle Ages: ‘The association of all members of the Family under one roof, upon one property, for the purpose of common work and common gain, is the universal characteristic phenomenon from the South of France to its furthest ends.’”

As a justification of the rights of all members of the Family to partake in the *use* of the property this appeal to the past is forcible. But it does not seem

<sup>1</sup> *Erbrechtspolitik*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

to afford any argument in support of the *division* of that property, and its appropriation to individuals. On the contrary, the relation between the Family as a unit and the property which it holds in common is even more completely shattered by its distribution amongst its several members than by its appropriation by one member only.

The new law of inheritance was generally regarded in France as one of the most emphatic signs of the triumph of republican over monarchical principles. In Napoleon's hands, however, it was no question of principle, but part of a deliberate policy designed to break down effectually the power of the great Families who would be likely to oppose his progress. Thus it was no change in principle, but a mere continuation of the same policy of self-aggrandisement which led him between 1808-12 to re-institute hereditary titles and estates which should descend by primogeniture under the new name of "majorats." As a monarch he felt the necessity of strengthening his position by creating great Families whose interests should be identical with his own, and no fear of inconsistency withheld him. By 1830 no less than 440 entails had been thus created.<sup>1</sup>

The same device for breaking down the power of the great Families was used by the Tzars in Russia when they introduced the equal division of both titles and estates; and by the English statesmen when they enforced equal division upon the great Catholic families in Ireland, while permitting

<sup>1</sup> Cecil, *Primogeniture*.



primogeniture to continue amongst the Protestants (1703).

The importance of the Family in the statesman's eyes as a political instrument was once more emphasised when the Bourbons returned with the emigrant aristocrats. For a time the King held the balance between noble and citizen; but with the accession of the Comte d'Artois, the aristocratic principle received the support of the Crown, and the struggle to reintroduce the *ancien régime* began—a struggle which was largely for the re-introduction of privileged Families, of primogeniture and feudalism against younger sons and the bourgeoisie.

The first reactionary proposal in 1828 was to make "majorats" legal for every one. This was not, it was said, to impose upon the people a new privileged class, but rather to make it competent for every one to enter a privileged class. Moreover, it was urged, the land had now been subdivided as far as it could be done with profit; landed proprietors were getting poorer and more numerous, while the bourgeoisie was getting richer and more powerful. The time had come to check the division of property, and this must be done by the creation of indivisible estates, which should confer electoral rights upon the owners and be inherited by primogeniture. The proposal was referred without discussion to a commission which never reported. It was renewed next year with no more success, but one of the arguments then brought forward to support it is full of interest from the point of view of our modern urban problems. Small holdings,

it was urged, were a pest. It was due to them that out of the thirty millions of the French population, twenty-four millions inhabited the country. The depopulated towns sought in vain for consumers of their products, the small owners in the country were in no position to purchase, for their only industry consisted in consuming what they produced.<sup>1</sup>

In 1826 an attempt was made to approach the desired end by another way. The *Code Civil* had left it open to fathers to dispose freely of a certain specified fraction of their property. It was now suggested that when the father failed to dispose of this fraction it should go by law to the eldest son, and that it might be entailed upon two successive persons.

This proposal was supported quite frankly upon political grounds. A monarchy, it was said, must be strengthened and supported by a monarchical spirit amongst the people, and this could only be attained by founding the monarchy upon the Family instead of upon the individual. For the essence and aim of a monarchy is permanence, and this permanence the physical existence of the individual is too brief to ensure. It can only be based upon Families which include future as well as present generations. In Democracy the particular man, the man of a day, is the unit; but in a Monarchy it is the Family, the being which does not and will not change. Hence the task of a monarchy is to found Families, and this can only be done by checking the division of landed property. The concentration of land in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 53.

one creates men who have an interest in maintaining the existing order; it upholds the Family in the social position to which it has attained; it institutes a monarchical arrangement in the Family itself; and thus it creates a people with a spirit in harmony with that of the monarchy.

It was, says Brentano, a reactionary attack upon equality in the very heart of the Family. "Der skandal war enorm"; it echoed throughout the whole of France, and petitions rained upon both Houses. All were against the proposal with few exceptions, and even these few begged that the new law should be supplemented by the erection, at the cost of the State, of cloisters and asylums for the younger sons and daughters, thus showing their appreciation of the consequences involved.

Notwithstanding the opposition of public feeling, the Ministry persisted in pressing the Bill. The first clause, attempting to reintroduce primogeniture *ab intestato* was rejected, and Paris was illuminated. The clause introducing entails was passed by both Chambers; but ministry and monarchy survived its success but a short time, and by 1849 "majorats," "substitutions," and entails of all kinds had been completely abolished, and the provisions of the *Code Civil* triumphantly vindicated.

Equal division of property at the death of the father amongst his children (with the noted exception of a given fraction) is thus enforced by law in France of to-day. Can it be said that this provision really carries out in practice the theory that the property



belongs to the Family and not to the individual? In some respects it would seem to do just the contrary, and to aim rather at enforcing the claim of the individual as against the Family. During his lifetime there is no restriction upon the power of the owner in dealing with his property; and when the time comes for dividing the inheritance the claims of individual members may be enforced in ways most injurious to the interests of the Family as a whole. Indeed, it may almost be said that the Family as a whole ceases to exist as soon as any question of inheritance comes into play. Any one of the co-heirs may insist on the property being divided in such a way as to reduce its value greatly—*e.g.* by breaking up the land,—and the father has not even the power to prescribe such a division as may give a fair share to each without injuring the actual value of any part.

With regard to the actual working of the practice, Brentano maintains that it has been mainly, if not entirely, beneficial. He argues that the fall in the birth-rate cannot be due to the compulsory division of property, inasmuch as in Belgium, where the same law of inheritance prevails, and the land is still more subdivided, the population increases rapidly. Moreover, the small proprietor is already too low in the social scale to be deterred from increasing his family by the fear that his children will fall lower; and it is actually in those districts where the smallest peasant proprietorship prevails that there is still an increasing population.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 138.

Further, "it is not the case that equal division of the property of the testator generally leads to the ruin of all the children. It may happen now and again. . . . But the rule is that the small inheritance left to each child forms the starting point from which he, like his father, works his way up by an industrious life to economic independence, and which enables him also to bring up his children in such a way as to be able in their turn to carry on the struggle for existence even without a large inheritance. In this way, as we see from the example of the French rural populations, they form the best anchor for the stability of Society and the State. The important thing is, not to have a few people, sleepy possessors of inherited estates, exalting themselves above their brothers who are thrust out at the death of their father into the proletariat, . . . but to give to all the possibility of achieving freedom and life."<sup>1</sup>

In short, it is the equality of the "younger brother" which is at stake, and the best means of securing to him as good a life as that of the first-born; a problem which has troubled Europe for centuries, and led to many curious theories and arguments and hardly less curious practical results.

One thing seems clear, that the problem is not really solved if the solution merely takes the form of reducing all alike to a state of poverty, and this is what the opponents of equal division maintain. The position in France seems to require far more detailed

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 142.

study than it has yet received before Brentano's conclusion can either be maintained or refuted. Such a study has been initiated by M. Demolins and his school, and passages such as the following seem to throw a different light upon the situation. He is discussing the influence of the vine upon its cultivators: "No other form of culture can support so numerous a population upon so small a space. We need only look for proof to the *île de Ré*, where the population is as dense as that of the *département du Nord*. The attraction of the vine over the young people serves to keep them at home quarrelling over bits of land, rather than seek their fortune elsewhere. They are the more easily able to make a small living for themselves, because, under the régime of the unstable family, the birth-rate is generally lowered, through fear of further division of properties already so tiny. Hence there is no need to move away, and no one thinks of doing so."<sup>1</sup>

But even Brentano himself confesses the superiority of a "family partnership," which, in its results at least, strongly resembles the *famille-souche*. "Equal division by itself is certainly not the ideal corresponding to the circumstances and needs of the day. We must strive to complete it by a co-operative association of the heirs for the purpose of carrying on the inherited business, such as I have found amongst certain advanced Families in Italy. Such a co-operative business, based upon blood-relationship, maintains

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, p. 146.



the equal right of all the heirs, secures to the Family and the property whatever business capital it possesses, provides in the members of the Family the labour necessary for carrying on the business, and thus renews deliberately and upon a common basis the old household community, the ancient Family, so much lauded by Le Play.”<sup>1</sup>

The writer then cites several instances of such co-operative households amongst Italians, of which the most remarkable is one which he came across in Cortina in 1892. The landlord of the hotel in which he was staying belonged to a Family which formed a household community modernised to suit modern conditions. Next to the hotel stood a farm-house, the ancestral home of the Family, and there lived an unmarried sister, who cultivated the family land. One brother was a smith, another a carpenter, a third a baker and confectioner; the first two lived in their workshops, while the baker had his workshops and dwelling on the ground floor of a dépendance of the hotel. Another brother was a military doctor, and another *Genieoffizier*, both married, and living one in Trient and the other in Trieste. All six brothers and the sister lived in economic community, having one purse and sharing income and expenditure. It was from this common purse that the hotel, and later its dépendance, were built; both being managed by the head of the Family. The rooms of the hotel had been fitted by the carpenter and smith, and the farm and the baker supplied a great part of the provisions.

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 143.

The two brothers in Trieste and Trient contributed nothing to the common purse, "because military doctors and officers have nothing to spare," but they were regarded as having a full share in the family property.

France, then, has adopted a definite and determined policy in reference to the relation between the Family and its Property. The State takes the view that the property belongs to the individual members of the Family as individuals, and enforces the right of the individual against the Family as a community. In so far, then, as the law prevails, if the family tie continues to be strong in France, it will not be because the members are held together by their common relation to material property, but rather in despite of their power to cut themselves adrift from each other, each with his own share in his hand. From one point of view it is difficult not to regard this as a great source of weakness ; it is as if a number of men supported by the same rope should each claim his right to the part he holds, and enforce his absolute possession by cutting it above and below. From another point of view it can no doubt be represented as a source of strength ; if several men are starving upon an insufficient patrimony, it is well that they should take each his share and seek new fields.

But besides the question whether the policy is in the real interests of the people, there is the further question of how far the State has been able to enforce the policy. As a matter of fact, it seems clear that

not even the power of the State has been able to break down the old custom in parts of the country where the family feeling is strong in favour of preserving the home intact, and where the particular form of industry is favourable to it. Throughout whole districts in France individuals continue deliberately and in defiance of the law to sacrifice their own fortunes to the welfare of the Family, or rather to find their own fortunes in the welfare of the Family. Of Auvergne, M. Demolins writes: "The family community is now reduced, as in the Pyrenees and the Causses, to its simplest expression; it comprises the *ménage* of the parents, that of the son who is the *héritier-associé*, and the unmarried brothers and sisters. In the greater part of Auvergne, as in the two preceding types, and still under the influence of the pastoral art, they continue to make an 'heir' who represents the community. . . . The old custom of giving more to that one of the children who carries on the Family survives in the mountains. 'Il faut que la maison fume,' it is said everywhere; that is, the home must be maintained in a certain degree of relative comfort, and for that purpose an 'eldest son' is made, an heir, to whom the house is left, together with its furniture, the beasts on the farm, and the fields or meadows which surround it or lie nearest to it as an appanage. The new *ménage* brings its contingent of labour, and *lives in common* with relations of all ages and all degrees. Thus several generations are united under one roof, recognising the authority of the head of the Family so



long as he remains capable of ruling. Besides the children, the father, and the grandfather, there are always in the house unmarried uncles and aunts, working for the profit of the house, regarding the children who are born as their own, and almost always leaving to the heir their share in the inheritance from the grandparents and whatever savings they have been able to make. . . . Many young men give up all idea of becoming heads of Families themselves, in order that they may add to the welfare of the home. Many girls courageously devote themselves to celibacy and remain at home, knowing that they will never be paid for their work, and that later on they will have to submit to the rule of children yet unborn. One of the material effects of the application of these ideas is, that the property is almost always preserved intact in the hands of one member in each Family. 'Morcellement' is a thing unknown in the mountains."<sup>1</sup>

But though this type still continues in Auvergne, M. Demolins thinks that it shows signs of disappearing. "The fact is, there are two distinct types of Auvergnats. The one, represented by the old parents, by the heir, and by all the Auvergnats who remain in the country, continues to depend frankly upon the pastoral tradition of community of life; it is the type of the past, and tends to decline. The other, represented by the children who emigrate, has resolutely abandoned the old traditional supports; it is not jealous of the preference given to the heir,

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, p. 62.

because it feels able by its industry alone to earn money more quickly than he can."

Nevertheless the family community is found to persist, not only among the pastoral peoples, but also among the olive-growers of Provence, and the vine-growers of Armagnac.

"L'Armagnac," M. Laudet tell us, "is perhaps the region of France which struggles most persistently against the law of succession of the *Code Civil*. Ingenious ways are devised of avoiding equal partition. The institution of an heir, to whom is assigned the free share (*la quotité disponible*), is habitual in all classes of society. It is generally the eldest son who is preferred. But sometimes the choice of the testator falls upon the younger son, or even upon the daughter in preference to the son. Above all, the breaking up of the paternal domain must be avoided. . . . The remaining brothers and sisters continue to live under the same roof. They like to live together. . . . In many families it is no rare thing to find the old bachelor or old maid, the uncle or aunt, who has abandoned his rights almost entirely in order to promote the establishment of a brother or sister and guard against the family domain being broken up."

A similar resistance to the dispersion of the family community is found in Corsica and in Anjou. In the latter district especially, we are told that "to separate, to break the ties which bind them to each other, to renounce the life in common, causes them extraordinary distress. . . . Parents keep their

married children with them, by family arrangement or as salaried servants; at the death of one the survivor holds uncontested sway and maintains the common life. . . . In the upper class great efforts are made to maintain the position of the family by artificial proceedings. The great proprietors have been established on their estates for generations by means of a system of *integral transmission*. The great problem for every family is to avoid the compulsory division and transmit the estate entire to the eldest son. To enable them to do so they dream of a rich marriage, by means of which the eldest son can compensate his brothers and sisters. It is hoped that the other brothers, generally in the army, may, thanks to their uniform, marry well enough to be moderate in their claims when the time for division comes. The girls are kept at home, for want of a *dot* to marry them, or are even sent to a convent.”<sup>1</sup>

That in the long run the law will prevail is possible, and the Family will cease to find its strength in relation to a common property in proportion as the individual members feel themselves capable of achieving an independent career through their own exertions. But it is not inconceivable that as France finds her rural population flocking into the cities, where every country youth first seeks his fortunes, she may reconsider her policy, and either attempt to throw the weight of legislation the other way, or leave the people free to handle their property as

<sup>1</sup> *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, pp. 354-55.



may seem best in the interests of the Family as a whole.

When we turn to Germany we find the State exercising its influence in an exactly opposite direction. In Prussia, after a long series of reforms designed to break down the feudal dependence of the peasantry upon the nobility, and to encourage an increase of free peasant proprietors, a reaction has set in which—as in France—takes the form of limiting the peasant's freedom in disposing of his property. But instead of enforcing equal division amongst the children, Prussian legislation favours a form of primogeniture under which the land and homestead must pass undivided to one heir (the eldest son by preference), and the remaining children can be provided for only from other sources or by a small charge upon the estate. It is true that this law of "Anerbenrecht" applies primarily only to a certain class of properties known as "Rentengüter," and not to freehold land; but there seems no doubt that the State desires to see it applied universally, and that the tendency is for its sphere of application to increase. The policy is variously ascribed to different motives. Herr Brunner, in his *Grundzüge der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, speaks of it as directed against the overburdening of the land with mortgages, and its overdivision into too small holdings. Brentano, on the other hand, regards it as the outcome of a reactionary movement on the part of the Junkerthum, and an attempt to reintroduce feudal

conditions amongst a free peasantry. But it does not appear that the State has been influenced by considerations either of the type of Family to be favoured, or of justice towards the individual members of the Family, in pursuing its policy. Indeed, Brentano maintains that in introducing the law the State has been concerned merely for the maintenance in good condition of the land, and not at all for the people upon the land. He represents the argument of its main supporter, Dr. Miquel, as follows: "We re-introduce the feudal system by which the succeeding heir is favoured at the expense of his brothers and sisters; for when the State makes such sacrifices in order to found a new peasantry, it cannot, of course, be guided by a sentimental regard for persons, but only by regard for the productiveness of the newly-created farm. It is not man who is the object and aim of national economy; for the clear understanding of the Manchester School it was capital, and for the wise agrarian politician it can be nothing else than the farm."

Although the State was not primarily interested in the Family, it could not of course be ignored that it was directly interfering in its management and organisation, and the justification offered took the line of Le Play's argument in defence of the *famille-souche*. It was necessary, it was said, that the younger brothers and sisters should be sacrificed for the sake of preserving the estate in the possession of the Family. Moreover, the apparent sacrifice was really a benefit, inasmuch as a shelter was preserved

for the old age of the younger members, while the heir worked hard throughout his life in order to pay their annuities from the estate. In short, the attempt is made to represent the compulsory "Anerbenrecht" as parallel to the voluntary and customary community of property, to which, as we have seen, so many of the European peasants still cling.

But the parallel does not really hold. There is no community of property under the Prussian "Anerbenrecht"; the brothers and sisters are neither intended nor expected to stay on in the home; and their claim upon the estate—which at best is very small—expires after the lapse of thirty-three years, at the time, that is, when they are most likely to need a shelter.<sup>1</sup>

And most important difference of all, the arrangement is a compulsory one, and forced upon a people whose traditions and customs are opposed to it. Nor is it possible for them to avoid the law by any mutual agreement amongst themselves, as the French peasant avoids *his* law; for the State, being for the most part landlord of the "Rentengüter," has a direct interest in seeing its provisions carried out. Brentano, who is strongly opposed to the policy, describes its effect in Polish Prussia as follows: "The 'Anerbenrecht' conflicts so strongly with the sense of justice of the Polish people that many are prevented by it from taking land. Again, it often happens that a father who holds land would stay at home to cultivate it while the sons went to the industrial districts

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 335.



of the west, where money wages are higher, where they would save money and send it home to be used towards the purchase of the land. Or if the estate were larger, the father would cultivate it with his grown children, and so save the wages of hired servants, and be able the sooner to extinguish his debt. Under 'Anerbenrecht' neither arrangement can survive, and in very many cases the existence of the holder of a 'Rentengut' would be endangered. Hence the Polish associations for acquiring land have reverted to purchasing land for capital instead of rent, and to self-help instead of State-help."

And as with the Prussian Poles, so also will it be, thinks Brentano, with the other peoples affected by the law. "I have no doubt that so soon as the peasants have practical experience of the change in the law of succession, the children will leave the homestead when they are old enough to seek work in the town, since their work upon the farm would profit the heir alone, and not themselves." Hence the probability that the peasants will avoid acquiring land under the conditions attaching to "Rentengüter." "Should this not be so—if the law of succession of 'Rentengüter' becomes applicable without modification—then the excluded heirs must utilise their scanty allowance to hasten into the towns or to foreign countries, where they would have better prospects of success."<sup>1</sup>

If Brentano's view of the situation is correct, we get the apparent paradox that the Prussian and French

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 347.

law of inheritance, though directly opposed in their policy, have the same result in breaking up the family life, and hastening the exodus from country to town. The truth would seem to be that *any* legislative interference with the relation between the Family and its property which does not accord with the customs and traditions of the people will, just so far as it is operative, break through the ties which hold the members of the Family together. And when the members of the Family have once been brought to regard their interests as conflicting, they have no choice but to separate. If circumstances permit of each acquiring sufficient land for his maintenance, they may still continue on the land; but in Western Europe this can rarely happen now, and nothing remains but for the majority to seek their fortunes in the towns or in emigration.

That the law will not always succeed at once in prevailing against tradition and immemorial custom we have already seen; and a striking instance is cited by Brentano in which a law attempting to regulate succession not only failed to take effect, but met with such determined opposition from the people that it had to be withdrawn. "About the same time that attempts were being made in France to re-introduce the *droit d'aînesse*, we find the Westphalian Provincial Assembly, which was dominated by the nobility, proposing to introduce a legal 'Anerbenrecht.'" In 1836 a law was passed, and in 1842, owing to the determined opposition of the people, it was repealed. The failure was the more

curious in that "Anerbenrecht," the inheritance by one child, was already customary in many families, and the law was applicable only in cases of intestacy. But "as soon as it came into force a storm of discontent and vehement resistance arose among the peasantry, and the hostile feeling was so strong as to lead to all sorts of attempts to evade the law. Fictitious contracts were made to avert its application, and other similar measures devised; it was even reported that some of the peasants lived 'in wilder Ehe,' so as to have no legitimate children to whom the law could apply." The reason for this opposition lay "in the infinite variety of needs arising out of the particular circumstances of each family. No law, however framed, could satisfy all these; but must conflict with interests in one direction or another."



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FAMILY AND THE STATE IN ENGLAND

It is notable that in England at the present day neither the Family in general nor the law of inheritance attracts much attention either from statesmen or from economists. In the past, indeed, the system of Primogeniture has been made to play a most effective part in determining the social history of the people; and it still holds its own, both as a custom and as the law of intestacy, with respect to the inheritance of land. But comparatively few Families in England are now directly affected by regulations or customs attaching to the inheritance of land. Amongst a peasantry whose sole opportunity of making a livelihood lies in the actual possession of land, it is of vital importance whether or not each member of a Family can in some way share in that opportunity; but to a people long accustomed to regard their living as depending upon their wage-earning capacity, questions of the inheritance of landed property become of minor importance. In England for the great mass of the people their dependence upon the land is so indirect and remote that the introduction of such a law as the Prussian

"Anerbenrecht" would have no appreciable effect upon their lives. A law of equal division, as in France, would be applicable, of course, to all Families possessing movable property, as well as those possessing land; but here again the English working-classes depend so much less upon the investment of capital than upon their individual skill and capacity as wage-earners, that such a law would have little effect either in increasing or diminishing their prosperity. That could only really be touched by legislation which should affect either the source of those qualities upon which they mainly depend for earning a living, or the industries in which those qualities are available.

In so far, indeed, as agriculture is one amongst other industries, any legislation affecting the distribution of land would also indirectly affect the position of the wage-earners employed upon it. If more land is made available for agricultural purposes, the demand for agricultural labourers may increase, and their position improve. If, again, the acquisition of small holdings is encouraged, we may possibly revive a class of peasantry in direct dependence upon the land, to whom the law of inheritance may once more become of importance. It is possible, therefore, that the time may yet come when Statesmen in England will, as on the Continent, turn their attention to the question of controlling the descent of property in the Family.

If we turn to the history of the question in

England we find, on the contrary, that the relation between the Family and its property has been in the past a matter of anxious consideration to Statesmen, and in later times to economists. The history, taken in its broad outlines, starts from the position of the Anglo-Saxons. We have already seen how land may be possessed either in common by all members of a community, or by the Family, or by the individual. Amongst the Anglo-Saxons much of the land was held in common by the village communities—public property. But what private property there was belonged not to the individual but to the Family. “The economic unit amongst the Anglo-Saxons, as amongst other peoples at an early stage of culture, was not the individual but the household. The property was the common property of all members of the household; all together were responsible for the action of each; the claims of one were the claims of all; industry was carried on in common under the guidance of the eldest or father of the family.”<sup>1</sup>

It followed from this common possession of the property by the Family that there was no inheritance, properly speaking. When the chief died the Family did not die. It continued as before to hold and work the land in common, only under the guidance of a new chief. But should the Family break up, and cease therefore to exist as an economic unit, then the property would be equally divided amongst the male members; and inasmuch as such a dissolution would tend to take place, if at all, at the death of the chief

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 180.



by whose authority it had been ruled, the division of the property might not unnaturally come to be regarded in time as a form of inheritance *from* the father. But originally it would seem that when a division took place the dead man himself was assigned his share : a share which took the form of animals to be sacrificed or articles to be buried with him, and which was in later times diverted to the Church, as payment for attending to the welfare of his soul. We find the same feeling, if not actually a relic of the same custom, amongst many of our people to-day, in the pompous funeral rites which are held to be the dead man's due from the surviving members of his Family.

But there was always one portion of the family property which was not susceptible of division, and that was the homestead. Not only amongst the Anglo-Saxons, but also amongst the Celts (notably in Wales) it was customary for this to be assigned to the *youngest* son. Various explanations have been given for this custom (known as borough-English), and all seem to point to the fact that the elder sons had left the Family before the death of the father. In that case, whether they had already received their full share of the property or not, they would have made their own homes, and it was natural that the old homestead should fall as his share to the son who had remained longest under the rule of his parents. But even after division had become prevalent, the holders of the divided property were held to be incapable of disposing of their shares without the

consent of the relations; they could not, therefore, dispose of them by will. At the time of the Conquest this inflexible tie between the Family and its property had somewhat relaxed, Brentano thinks under the influence of the Church, which would be likely to profit by the freedom of the individual to bequeath to it some of the family property; but the prevalent form of inheritance continued to be equal division amongst male children, with the homestead going as his share to the youngest son.

From this to the system of Primogeniture, which gave the property to the eldest son with total or partial exclusion of the remaining children, was surely one of the most striking of the many changes introduced by the Norman Conquest. It could hardly have been imposed even upon a conquered people unless there had been some circumstances to soften the abruptness of the change, and make it seem, to a certain extent, in accordance with the custom of the people. Perhaps the principal mediator would be the old conception of the Family as a community, which still maintained its interest in the family property as a whole, even after its actual appropriation to individual use. This conception made its influence felt amongst the Anglo-Saxons in the restrictions imposed upon the individual in the disposal of his land; and amongst their Norman conquerors in the exertions made by the feudal head of the Family to promote the fortunes of the younger branches. The feudal system was not originally inconsistent with the equal division of the property

amongst sons. Brentano quotes from the *libri feudorum*: "Vasallo mortuo ad filios *aequaliter* pertinet feudum."<sup>1</sup> But even after Primogeniture had become firmly established as custom, and for a time even as law, the head of the Family and its junior branches have continued to regard themselves more or less as a community with common interests. It is, of course, a long step from a community in which the property is merely *managed* by the head in the interests of all to one in which it is *owned* by the head, even though he may continue to bear the interests of all in mind; but the moral sense of the people might be less offended by such a step than by a change which would have brought about a complete dissolution of the Family.

In the second place, the people were already, to some extent, prepared for the preference of one son above the others by the custom of borough-English. The homestead, which went to the youngest son, must always have seemed the most important share of the inheritance, as being the centre, not only of the property, but also of the whole family tradition, history, and association. And in the disturbed and dangerous times which followed upon the Conquest the concentration of power in the hands of the eldest, and therefore presumably the strongest member of the Family, might come to be recognised as an advantage even by the younger sons themselves.

But the change in the family organisation was due, for the main part, to the fact that the chief

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, *op. cit.* p. 181.



ownership of the land had itself changed. Instead of belonging directly to Families, it now belonged to the king. "Land was held by the Church in return for dues of prayer or praise, by the knight in return for military service, by the small freeman in return for service and rent." And when land was thus held as a fief, it became necessary for the Family to select a representative to be invested with it; this representative was the eldest member, and from him the remaining members of the Family held their share of the inheritance as tenants. "From this function of the eldest member as chief ruler of the family estate there developed gradually an exclusive right, *i.e.* Primogeniture."

It was with respect to land granted to the Normans that the new method of inheritance first prevailed; the obligation to preserve the property intact being imposed as a source of strength to the Family, which would enable it to hold its own against a conquered but hostile people. Amongst the Saxons the ultimate ownership of the land passed also to the Crown, and those who had previously been owners of small freehold properties (*socage land*) now held them from a feudal lord in return for services and dues. Here, however, the Crown had no object in enforcing a strong organisation, and the custom of equal inheritance was preserved for two hundred years after the Conquest.<sup>1</sup> "But the judges were in favour of the feudal system. Where it could not be expressly proved that equal inheritance had prevailed in the

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 182.

past, they presumed in favour of Primogeniture. But no such proof was forthcoming when a Family had so far held together and no division had taken place within the memory of man. So here also, before the end of the thirteenth century, Primogeniture triumphed, except in Kent, where equal inheritance by the sons—the special mark of Saxon freedom—persists until to-day.” Even in Kent many lands have now been “disgavelled” by the wish of the owners, and subjected to the ordinary law of Primogeniture.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst those of the peasants who held their land on servile tenure there was originally no inheritance, even by the Family as a whole. They worked the land in the interests of their lord, and he was sole heir. Gradually it was found convenient to recognise the succession of the children to the land worked by their fathers; but it was always the Family as such which succeeded. But should the Family break up, then the land passed intact—for the lord would not permit division—to one son, and this son, in analogy to the custom of borough-English, was the youngest. “The succession of the youngest was so universal amongst the serfs as actually to stand for a mark of servitude. It was for this reason that it disappeared, with few exceptions, in the course of economic progress. The commutation of services into money payments begins with the twelfth century. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it forms the chief feature of the social development of the country. And

<sup>1</sup> Cecil, *Primogeniture*.

it is characteristic that with this substitution of money payments for services there appears also the change in the system of inheritance. Instead of the succession of the youngest, which had become a mark of servitude, the aristocratic system of Primogeniture prevails,"<sup>1</sup> and with Primogeniture there emerges also the problem of the younger brother.

We see, then, that in England also Primogeniture was introduced by the State as a definite policy, designed to strengthen the ruling powers by the creation and maintenance of great Families, able to hold their own in a hostile country. It was a practical recognition by Statecraft of the close relation between the Family and the State, a relation which was to vary through succeeding centuries between mutual support and the deadliest conflict, and which led to constant efforts on one side or the other to diminish or enhance the greatness of the Family; and it must be borne in mind that though the State has concerned itself little in the past with the family life of the great mass of the people, yet no policy affecting the nobles, no privilege conceded to or blow struck at the "great Families" could be altogether without effect upon the more obscure. We have just seen how the introduction of Primogeniture spread through all classes down to the lowest. Even more important to the welfare of the people, though less direct in its action, was the distribution of land effected by the varying success and

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 183.



failure of the great Families to maintain their estates intact and secure their transmission to their heirs.

Instead of following the whole course of legislation and custom in respect to Primogeniture in England and its effect upon the Family, it will be sufficient for the present purpose to select some of the more characteristic moments as illustrations. The first of these is the creation of entails in 1285 by the Act known as *de donis conditionalibus*. This was a measure introduced by the greater feudal lords and the Crown to secure that the estates granted by them should pass intact to the direct descendants of the man to whom they were originally granted, and failing the direct heir should revert to the lord, . . . “the owner of land which had been granted to him, and his heirs could no longer alienate the estate or burden it with debt, either wholly or partially, for longer than his lifetime; he became the mere life user of the property, and after his death it passed to his eldest son, who then found himself in the same legal position. On the other hand, the estate could not be confiscated for high treason for longer than the lifetime of the present owner.” A clause of special importance this to the feudal lord, who naturally resented seeing his property confiscated by the Crown because of his tenant’s misbehaviour.

Economically the effect of the law was reactionary. It secured, indeed, the feudal lords in their rights over their tenants, and against any possible diminution of the extent of their influence in so far as this arose out

of landed property. But it also, at a time when there was a great movement towards the more intensive cultivation of land, secured that estates should remain under the control of one line of men, quite irrespective of their capacity or desire to improve them. And its effect upon family relations and the education of the young would seem to have been still worse. Bacon writes of this in terms which seem to justify all Le Play's arguments in favour of maintaining a father's authority by preserving his liberty of bequest: "Entails began by a statute made in Edw. I.'s time; by which also they are so much strengthened, as the tenant in tail could not put away the land from the heir by any act of conveyance or attainder, nor let it nor encumber it longer than his own life. But the inconvenience thereof was great; for by that means, the land being so sure tied upon the heir as his father could not put it from him, it made the son to be disobedient, negligent, and wasteful, often marrying without the father's consent, and to grow insolent in vice knowing that there could be no check of disinherison over him. It also made the owners of land less fearful themselves to commit murders, felonies, treasons, and manslaughters; for that they knew none of these acts could hurt the heir in his inheritance. It hindered men that had entailed lands, that they could not make the best of their lands by fine and improvement; for that none, upon so uncertain an estate as for term of his own life, would give him a fine of any value, nor lay any great stock upon the land that might yield rent improved:

and, lastly, these entails did defraud the Crown and many subjects of their debts; for that the land was not liable longer than his own lifetime; which made that the king could not safely commit an office of account to such whose lands were entailed, nor other men trust them with loans of money.”<sup>1</sup>

This represents the high-water mark in England of what we may call the subjection of the Family to its property, its inability to handle it freely in the interests of the living, and at the same time of the greater security of the Family itself against dissolution or obscurity. Notwithstanding the great and obvious disadvantages of the situation, the nobles were strenuously opposed to any legislative change, because of the protection afforded to them against confiscation by the Crown; and when they desired greater freedom in dealing with their land, they contented themselves with evading the law by means of legal subtleties. But as time passed on the nobles ceased to be the pillars of the State; the Crown came to regard the great Families as rivals rather than allies, and under Henry VIII. permanent entails were made finally impossible in England.<sup>2</sup> Laws were passed also which made it possible for landowners both to sell their land during their lifetime, and to dispose of it by will at death: “So it came to pass that from the end of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth

<sup>1</sup> Lord Bacon's *Works*, Spedding and Heath, vol. ii. p. 490. Quoted by Brentano in German, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> The only exceptions now are estates which have been purchased with money provided by Parliament and presented to eminent men and their heirs in return for public services, *e.g.* Blenheim and Strathfieldsaye.



century landowners had practically complete freedom of dealing with their land, both during life and at death. But those are the two centuries in which, for the first time in England, the transition to more intensive occupation of the land took place to any extent, while at the same time England could boast of a numerous and free class of small farmers."

In saying this Brentano probably attributes more prosperity to the freeing of the land than is warranted by the industrial history of England. One great feature of the earlier part of the period in question was the rapid growth of sheep-farming, in consequence of which many small holders were turned out of their farms, and the land thrown into great sheep-walks. But when once the land was freed there was always the probability of its being put to good use, since those who could not make it support them would sell to those who could.

Under the Tudors, then, the policy of the Crown was directed towards weakening the great Families, and in this policy it looked for its main support to the people. Hence the legislation prohibiting entails, which had for its effect the loosening of that tie between a Family and its property which previously served to maintain the ascendancy of a noble Family against the weakness due to division, or against the dissoluteness of any one member.

But under the Stuarts the policy was again reversed; once more the aristocracy prevailed and were able to legislate in their own interests. For us the significant feature of the change lies in the reintro-

duction of entails; in England under the modified form of "Settlements" in the reign of Charles II., and in Scotland as permanent entails under James II. In both cases Brentano attributes the movement in the first instance to the need felt by the nobles of protecting their estates against confiscation for high treason: "But even after the need of protecting themselves against confiscation for high treason had passed, both the new-fashioned English and the old-fashioned Scottish entails could not fail to be acceptable to large proprietors. The limitations on alienation and indebtedness which they imposed upon the proprietor undoubtedly served to enrich at least one member in the family in each generation. And the more aristocratic the Government of Great Britain became, the greater would be the influence of this one member if he were very rich."

During the last century the Family has lost much of its political importance in England. It is true that the ideas of the Crown and of the Royal Family are inseparably connected in the English mind; but the Crown, as represented by the Royal Family, no longer needs to maintain its supremacy either through the assistance of, or in conflict with, the other great Families of the nation. On the other hand, the possibilities of being involved in high treason are so remote, that the great Families no longer need to protect their estates from confiscation by devices of settlement and entail. Nor is there any serious political rivalry between them and the people. The

Cecils may continue to have periods of predominance in political administration ; the House of Elder Sons may now and again succeed in placing a check upon some popular legislative proposal ; but all are well aware that their influence is maintained only in the interests of the nation as a whole, and cannot be permanently at variance with the popular will. If any serious conflict of interests remains between the persistence of the aristocratic principle of Primogeniture and the democratic principle of the equality of brothers, we must look for it in the spheres of social and economic life rather than of politics.

It was in relation to the land question that an economic conflict first became pressing and obvious. Adam Smith represented it as follows : " In Europe the law of primogeniture and perpetuities of different kinds, prevent the division of great estates, and thereby hinder the multiplication of small proprietors. A small proprietor, however, who knows every part of his little territory, who views it with all the affection which property, especially small property, naturally inspires, and who upon that account takes pleasure not only in cultivating but in adorning it, is generally of all improvers the most industrious, the most intelligent, and the most successful. The same regulations, besides, keep so much land out of the market that there are always more capitals to buy than there is land to sell, so that what is sold always sells at a monopoly price. The rent never pays the interest of the purchase money, and is besides



burdened with repairs and other occasional charges to which the interest of money is not liable. . . . If landed estates, however, were divided equally among all the children, upon the death of any proprietor who left a numerous family, the estate would generally be sold. So much land would come to market that it could no longer sell at a monopoly price. The free rent of the land would go nearer to pay the interest of the purchase money, and a small capital might be employed in purchasing land as profitably as in any other way."

Here then was a clear case of conflict between the Family and the community, in so far as the Family found it essential to its maintenance to preserve its hold upon the land by means of Primogeniture, and in so far as any considerable section of the community was in fact debarred from making its livelihood upon the land. Why was it that such a clear conflict was so slow to lead to any reconciling change? Brentano suggests the following causes.

In the first place, the French Revolution with all its terrors had included the abolition of Primogeniture and entails. Hence there was a reaction in England, a reaction perhaps of feeling rather than of reason, in favour of leaving the old order undisturbed notwithstanding its disadvantages.

In the second place, the class of small cultivators which Adam Smith had in mind, and which would mainly have profited by the breaking up of landed estates, had already disappeared to a large extent.

Again, the increasing tendency towards cultiva-

tion on a large scale, due to the introduction of new methods, was all in favour of large estates rather than small holdings. The significance of this change may be estimated by comparing the following passages from A. Smith and Froude, the latter written just a hundred years after the former.

A. Smith, bk. iii. chap. ii. (1776)—“It seldom happens, however, that a great proprietor is a great improver. . . . To improve land with profit, like all other commercial projects, requires an exact attention to small savings and small gains, of which a man born to a great fortune, even though naturally frugal, is very seldom capable. The situation of such a person naturally disposes him to attend rather to ornament which pleases his fancy, than to profit for which he has so little occasion. The elegance of his dress, of his equipage, of his house, and household furniture, are objects which from his infancy he has been accustomed to have some anxiety about. The turn of mind which this habit naturally forms, follows him when he comes to think of the improvement of land. He embellishes perhaps four or five hundred acres in the neighbourhood of his house, at ten times the expense which the land is worth after all his improvements; and finds that if he was to improve his whole estate in the same manner, and he has little taste for any other, he would be a bankrupt before he had finished the tenth part of it. There still remains in both parts of the United Kingdom some great estates which have continued without interruption in

the hands of the same family since the times of feudal anarchy. Compare the present condition of those estates with possessions of the small proprietors in their neighbourhood, and you will require no other argument to convince you how unfavourable such extensive property is to improvement."

Froude, *On the Uses of a Landed Gentry* (1876)—  
"And the farther what is called the land monopoly is carried, the more, that is, the small estates are absorbed in the large, the better these duties will be performed. I don't know how it may be in Scotland, but I know that in England you can tell by the look of the country which you are passing through whether it belongs to a large landowner or a small one. Compare an estate owned by one man with a hundred thousand a year, and a similar estate divided among a hundred owners with a thousand a year each. On which of these will the working tenants find themselves best off? The one great man's establishment may be expensive, but after all it is but one. The expenses of the most splendid household will not reach a hundred thousand a year, or half that sum, or a quarter of it. The great man is on a pedestal. If he is evil spoken of, his pedestal becomes a pillory. Therefore he does not press his rights when he might press them. The customs of the manor are generally observed. Farm buildings are kept in good condition, fences are in good repair, cottages have roofs which will keep the rain out. You find churches, you find schools, you find everything which public opinion



demands or approves. Turn to the estate which is divided between the hundred less conspicuous proprietors. Will an equal margin of income be forthcoming for improvements? Will there be the same consideration for tenants and labourers? There cannot be, because a hundred private establishments have to be supported instead of one, and a hundred families struggling to maintain the position of gentry with inadequate means. By them every farthing which their estate will yield is required for their ordinary expenditure. They are embarrassed. They must borrow. Their obvious duties are left undone. You read the story in unmended fences, in broken gates, in decaying farmhouses. At length a crisis comes, and unless entail interferes the land is sold to some one who can better afford to keep it."

Froude's estimate of the advantages of large estates may be an exaggerated one, but it certainly represents one of the reasons why there has not been more change in the direction of subdividing landed property. Still another reason may be found in the fact that the enormous growth of manufacturing industries and commerces, bringing life in the towns and the possibilities of early marriage, afforded more attractive opportunities to the mass of the people than the cultivation of small holdings, and so prevented any popular demand for legislation. Moreover, in England at any rate, and to some extent in Scotland, the exclusion of the people from the possession of the land does not necessarily mean its exclusion from the occupation and cultivation of the

land; and should any considerable demand arise for "small holdings" from people capable of cultivating them, it is unlikely that any vested interest will be allowed to stand in the way of the satisfaction of that demand. The policy of "back to the land" is likely to find a far more serious obstacle in the almost complete estrangement of the present generation from a country life, than in the scarcity of available land. The latter can always be overcome, if need be, by legislation; the former only by a change in deeply-rooted habits and capacities.

Nevertheless, in the first half of the last century the monopoly became serious. At the beginning of the century it was shown that more than half the land in Scotland was entailed in a few hands, and hardly any was to be purchased. An attempt was made to modify Scottish entails to the less strict and less permanent form of English Settlements, but it was rejected by the House of Lords.

Under the English system of Settlements the entail is broken every generation and the land resettled; an opportunity being thus afforded to provide, at the heir's expense, for the widow and younger children, as well as for improvements of the property. For a long time this was regarded, says Brentano, as the ideal system of inheritance, as a pillar of the constitution, both by the members of the aristocracy themselves and by those who stood outside. But it could not permanently stand the test of changing public opinion and economic development. In 1873 the New Domesday Book was compiled, to ascertain

the facts about the ownership of land. It appeared that in England and Wales four-sevenths of the land was owned by 4000 persons, and almost a half by 2250 ; while in Scotland one man alone possessed 1,326,600 acres, and almost a quarter of the land belonged to twelve persons, and half of it to seventy. “ . . . the details, when looked into, do in part bear out what the agitators complained of. The House of Lords does own more than a third of the whole area of Great Britain. Two-thirds of it really belongs to great peers and commoners, whose estates are continually devouring the small estates surrounding them. The remaining third, in and about the great towns, is subdivided, and the subdivision is continually increasing, but the land there also is still falling mainly into the hands of the rich.”<sup>1</sup> It is little wonder that public opinion was impressed and sought for some means to check the growing monopoly. And public opinion was reinforced by the increasing difficulties of the landowners themselves. They were finding that their land demanded more and more investment of capital, while it was becoming more and more burdened with charges in favour of others than the heir. The conflict between the interests of the younger children and those of the eldest son, who would chiefly benefit from improvement of the estate and needed capital to work it to advantage, became acute ; and it is principally to this conflict and its effect upon the minds of the landowners themselves that Brentano attributes the “ Settled Land Act ” of

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *On the Uses of a Landed Gentry*.



1882. By this Act the owner for the time being of a Settled Estate is enabled to lease or sell at his discretion the whole or part of his estate, having regard to the interest of all parties entitled under the Settlement. The only part excepted from his discretion of sale is the principal residence with the park belonging to it. "This does not mean that the right to make Family Settlements and to entail property has been abolished. That continues as before. But for the purposes of entail land is treated exactly as other forms of capital. Entailed land can be converted at any moment into any other kind of property. . . . Thus the fettering of the land by entails is abolished."<sup>1</sup>

With this great change there disappeared the principal reason for which the law of intestacy enforcing Primogeniture with respect to land had been maintained. It could no longer be argued that the inviolable connection between a Family and its landed property was the necessary basis of an aristocracy; and in both Houses of Parliament bills have been approved, though they have not passed into law, which would have introduced the equal division of land, as of other property, in cases of intestacy.<sup>2</sup> With respect to land, therefore, Primogeniture still persists, as a custom recognised though not enforced by law. It is not unlikely to continue; for with the Settled Land Act there disappeared not only the reason for it, but also the principal reason

<sup>1</sup> Cecil, *Primogeniture*.

<sup>2</sup> House of Lords, 1889; House of Commons, 1893.

against it. The ability of the owner to part with land which he cannot profitably cultivate removes the chief source of conflict between the supposed interests of the Family and those of the community; and that being so, the public is little inclined to interest itself in the domestic question whether a father will treat all his children alike, or favour the eldest at the expense of the others.

Thus the question is losing its economic significance and seems chiefly of domestic interest; but socially it still retains importance. There can be no doubt that there tends to be a different type of social organisation, as well as the development of a different type of character, where a pre-eminent position in the Family is secured to the eldest son by endowing him more liberally with money, and by giving him a different education from the rest of the rising generation. "It would be difficult," writes Mr. Courtney, "to exaggerate the tenacity with which this system has driven its roots into English society, and the importance of its influence over the working of the constitution. Profoundly conservative forces abide and flourish under it. Although the institution of County Councils and the reform of District Councils have taken away many of the administrative functions of county magistrates, their judicial influence is practically intact, and it is from the owners of land that the magistrates are mainly recruited. What has been called the squirearchy is thus maintained over great parts of England, and an order has been

established, entrance into which is an object of ambition to members of the industrial and commercial classes as they grow wealthier, and continuance in which is jealously guarded on the part of those who have been born into it. The power of keeping together and handing down from father to son a sufficient endowment of property is almost a necessary accompaniment of the existence of any hereditary honours; and the security of the House of Lords, in which legislative privileges are hereditary along with titles of honour, would be seriously menaced if it were not buttressed by the influences derived from the possession of large estates spread throughout the country.”<sup>1</sup>

Whether such a system is in the interests of the community is a question which has been argued from many points of view, and will continue to be argued so long as the system endures. The further question of how far it is in the interests of the favoured eldest son himself, and of how far injustice is inflicted upon the younger sons, involves further consideration.

<sup>1</sup> Courtney, *Working Constitution*, p. 224.



## CHAPTER VII

### ON YOUNGER BROTHERS

“THE power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice.”<sup>1</sup>

To be tolerably well assured that when at last we reluctantly loosen our hold upon our property it will be enjoyed and administered by our own children instead of passing into the hands of strangers, is doubtless a great inducement to refrain from consuming it too freely in our immediate personal gratification. But although it affords a motive for accumulation, it can hardly by itself account for the persistent preference throughout centuries of change of the eldest son at the expense of the younger; indeed under the law of equal division in France parents show themselves even more strenuously thrifty and self-denying in the interests of their children than in England. It is the desire to

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Revolution in France*, p. 60.

"found a Family," or to maintain one, that upholds the custom of Primogeniture amongst us, and that is not altogether the same thing as the desire to leave our children the means of prosperity and comfort. To some extent, of course, it coincides; but there are other and much more subtle motives combined with it, partly selfish, partly noble and disinterested.

If we are to understand the persistence of a custom which seems at first sight so contrary to natural affection and justice, we must try in the first place to enter into the feeling of those to whom the Family is a very real and spiritual entity, comprising far more than the human individuals who may happen to be in existence at any moment. For them the long line of ancestors still lives; not the shadowy life of ineffectual ghosts haunting the scenes of past activity, but a life of great deeds or noble achievements or unstained reputation still echoing in the souls of their descendants, moulding their characters, influencing their wills, and through them continuing long after the death of the body to be a living force amongst the living. And it is this inheritance, far more than any material wealth, which the noblest desire to preserve, not only for their children's children, but for the nation also. It is an inheritance, indeed, which can never be wholly alienated nor entirely dissipated; we cannot, even if we would, shake ourselves free from those who have preceded us; and from this point of view the man who knows nothing of his own

grandfather may boast as long a line of ancestry as the proudest "Family." But for him his ancestors no longer live; his character has not been moulded by the knowledge of strength derived from them, nor his emulation fired by the desire to be worthy of them. He does not see himself as one link in a chain of spiritual life binding the generations together; and he is ignorant of the rich possibilities which lie buried in his nature. No voices speak to him from the past of what men with like temperaments to his may do; no echoes of past failures warn him where his own peculiar dangers lie. His inheritance is there, but he is unconscious of it; and being unconscious of it, he can neither control it nor benefit from it as the man may do to whom it is a living reality.

It seems at first sight a paradoxical thing to suggest that an inheritance such as this, so spiritual in its nature, so strong in its spirituality, can depend upon such a material fact as maintaining a strong hold upon the family acres. Cannot a man be mindful of his ancestors as well in a back street as in a country house? be as nobly worthy of them in poverty as in wealth? Yes, no doubt he can; but then he must be a man of exceptionally fine and imaginative character. Associations of place play a very large, if unrealised, part in preserving this spiritual inheritance. Amongst the peoples who practise ancestor-worship it is always the old domestic hearth which is sacred to the departed fathers, and it is around the family homestead that



their spirits haunt. And so it is with us also. It is on the domestic hearth that the sacredness of the Family is most strongly felt and guarded; it is around the old homestead that we find again most often and most easily the spirits of our ancestors. Their memories and traditions live, not only in the minds and hearts of the neighbouring people, but in the actual features of the country which have been moulded by their hands and wills. It is little wonder if in parting from his ancestral home the owner feels that he has loosened his hold also upon another and a far more important inheritance of which he has no right to deprive his children.

But there is more in it even than this. So long as the old home remains, it is not only a link which binds together past and future into one present Family; it also holds in one the different members of the living Family as no other place can do. The scene of a childhood passed in common, of joys and griefs shared in common, becomes in later life a meeting-place where old relations can be renewed, old feelings revived, and new joys and sorrows awaken the old sympathies, and where again the younger generation can meet and knit the ties of friendship for the future. Unless the family home does this for its sons and daughters, it falls far short of its highest function; but that it does do this in thousands of cases can hardly be denied.

One powerful motive, then, which tends to the perpetuation of Primogeniture is the desire of the Family to preserve for itself a permanent centre of

family life, which will not only facilitate intercourse amongst the living members of the Family, but will also enable them to maintain their hold upon the family spirit and tradition. It fears, and with some justice, that division of its property would sooner or later bring about its own dissolution. Even though its members should achieve individually wealth and reputation, yet they would be scattered; and without any permanent common interest the bonds holding them together in one spiritual whole might be weakened. It is the power of the living spirit of the past, even more than the power of the dead hand of the past, which perpetuates the "land-system" of England.

Another element which enters into the motive, and which probably predominates with those who set themselves to "found a Family," is the desire to perpetuate one's own name. There are perhaps few who would not wish to say "*non omnis moriar*"; but there are few again who can hope to achieve such personal distinction as will of itself rescue their name from oblivion. They look therefore to their children to carry on the name, and pass it forward through successive generations—a lingering relic of its original owners, which may still sound in the ears of men long after their visible forms have been obliterated.

But for this they desire not merely the perpetuation of the name; its actual continuance or extinction depends upon whether or not there are sons to bear it, and that again has little or nothing to do with the

possession of property. It is rather that the name should continue to be well known, to be often spoken, to carry weight, and that the bearer of it should by that very fact be influential amongst his neighbours and contemporaries; and the kind of influence desired is one which naturally attaches itself to the possession of land. In former days such possession carried with it, to a large extent, actual proprietary rights over the people occupying the land; and even at the present day the position of the landowner gives him an influence over those who live upon his estate which he could rarely acquire in any other way. Moreover, the possession of land ensures the continued influence of the Family *in one neighbourhood*; and in England at any rate it generally ensures the actual, if sometimes intermittent, presence of the Family there. Now, there is nothing so fatal to prestige and influence, especially if that prestige and influence have no very solid basis of intrinsic merit, as change of surroundings. The newcomer in a place not only depends upon his own merits for any influence he is to achieve; he may have long to wait before a chance presents itself of manifesting those merits. Hence a Family which leaves its home may fall into obscurity merely because in its new surroundings it has no weight of tradition and familiarity to keep it before men's minds. The policy therefore of the man who desires to found a Family is to attach it as firmly as possible to some definite portion of land which may serve to perpetuate the prestige of the family



name irrespective of the merits of any particular representative.

And given the end in view, the means adopted seem at any rate to afford the best chance of success. It is no doubt a loftier ideal that one's descendants should maintain the family influence by pre-eminence in their various vocations; and there is no doubt either that the family influence would thus be far more widely spread. But to the unimaginative eye of the ancestor there is something too intangible about an influence which he cannot foresee in all its details, and for which there may be "nothing to show" which will compare in concreteness with his own power over his tenants or his trees. Moreover, even though he be a man of ability himself, he has no means of ensuring that his ability shall be passed on to his descendants, or even to his own son. Primogeniture fails him and settlements are of no avail when the property consists in personal qualities, and he sees no certainty of rescuing his name from oblivion but by attaching it to the soil through the medium of his eldest son.

But the question is complicated, and has been from the first, by the problem of the younger brothers. To them belongs the line of ancestors, the family spirit, the old traditions, in no less a degree than to the first-born; and it has always been felt necessary to justify the preference of the eldest as being in some way conducive to the interests of the others. It is in the attempt to

meet this difficulty that the interests of the feudal Family have most often tended to conflict with the interests of the community at large; while at the same time it is in the younger brothers that we find the natural transition to the essentially modern Family of to-day.

The original theory and practice was, as we have seen, that the eldest born held the estate in trust for the younger members of the Family, and was expected to provide for them out of it or upon it; and this practice has continued longest where the family property is regarded as a business which all take their part in working. The difficulty first becomes acute when the property is expected to maintain the Family without any return on their part, and it is found sooner or later wherever there is an aristocracy which disdains to work for its living. The following story from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* shows how old is the troublesome question of the "poor relation" who is genteel as well as poor; and it shows also a very practical method of solving the difficulty. Socrates noticing one day that Aristarchus looked gloomy, asked him if he was in trouble. He answered: "Yes, Socrates, I am in sore straits indeed. Ever since the party strife declared itself in the city, what with the rush of people to Piræus, and the wholesale banishments, I have been fairly at the mercy of my poor deserted female relatives. Sisters, nieces, cousins, they have all come flocking to me for protection. I have fourteen free-born souls under my single roof, and how are we to live? We can get nothing

out of the soil—that is in the hands of the enemy ; nothing from my house property, for there is scarcely a living soul left in the city ; my furniture ? no one will buy it ; money ? there is none to be borrowed—you would have a better chance to find it by looking for it on the road than to borrow it from a banker. Yes, Socrates, to stand by and see one's relatives die of hunger is hard indeed, and yet to feed so many at such a pinch impossible."

Socrates then proceeds to remind Aristarchus that other citizens with households quite as large not only manage with the aid of their industry to feed them, but also to make a large profit. Is it because they are better educated in useful arts than Aristarchus' relatives ? Aristarchus assures him that, on the contrary, his relatives are quite as capable, but that the others are barbarians, while " my kinswomen are free-born ladies." " Then," asks Socrates, " on the ground that they are free-born and your kinswomen, you think that they ought to do nothing but eat and sleep ? " And he presses home the folly of a life spent in genteel idleness : " Do human beings in general attain to well-tempered manhood by a course of idling, or by careful attention to what will be of use ? Which will help a man the more to grow in justness and uprightness—to be up and doing, or to sit with folded hands revolving the ways and means of existence ? As things stand, I expect there is no love lost between you. You cannot help feeling that they are costly to you, and they must see that you find them a burthen."



Aristarchus is convinced of the wisdom of Socrates' argument, and borrows money to start manufactures. "A capital was provided; wools were purchased; the goodman's relatives set to work, and even whilst they breakfasted they worked, and on and on till work was ended and they supped. Smiles took the place of frowns; they no longer looked askance with suspicion, but full into each other's eyes with happiness. They loved their kinsman for his kindness to them. He became attached to them as helpmates." And so the incident of "distressed gentlewomen" closes.

It is to be feared that, with our modern forms of industry and the greater complexity of the business world, there are few Heads of Families who would find themselves capable of organising their dependent relations into an industrial community; while the unpractical education of our gentlewomen leaves the majority of them hopelessly incapable of earning a living. Moreover, there has perhaps never been a time in England when a Family of the feudal or aristocratic type would not have regarded such an expedient for maintaining itself as unsuited to its dignity and position. Yet many a great Family has sunk into obscurity which might have flourished with increased prosperity if its members had not taken it as a matter of course that they were to be maintained in idleness. But sons and daughters have had to be provided for, so long as the power of doing so remained, and we must describe briefly what have been the actual expedients resorted to, so far as they are known.

In the early days of feudalism in England there was little property of any kind except land,<sup>1</sup> and therefore practically no means of making provision for the younger children out of capital. The daughters seem to have been less of a problem than the sons. Then, as now, there was always the prospect of marriage, and in those days it was the business of the subjects of the feudal lord to provide the dowry for his daughters; while if they did not marry, they might either occupy a corner in the old home when it had descended to the eldest son, or find a last refuge in the cloister.

But the younger sons were less easily bestowed. In the days of fighting, the strength of the Family would depend not a little upon their strong arms, and if they were to be firmly attached to the family fortunes, then proper provision must be made for them. If the Family was great in the land and the estates large, it was common for some of the younger members to hold a part of them under the chief by the system known as "subinfeudation." For others there were rich bishoprics, abbeys, and churches; and others would enter into military service, or become soldiers of fortune. Or again, some would become judges, and (Brentano thinks) would use their influence in that capacity to undermine the power of Primogeniture.

But in 1290 subinfeudation was made illegal, in the interests of the great lords who lost their rights to the dues and services attaching to the land when

<sup>1</sup> Brentano, p. 183.

their tenants sublet it. The land must either be sold outright, in which case the new tenant would owe allegiance direct to the feudal lord, or not divided at all. But the introduction of entails prevented the complete alienation of any portion of the family estate in the interests of the younger brothers; and it would indeed have been contrary to the whole policy of the time. An aristocracy which depends for its influence upon landed property can only maintain its distinction by means of a system of Primogeniture or some modification of it. It is said that at the end of the fifteenth century there were in Brittany no less than twenty-five thousand nobles leading the lives of peasants upon diminutive estates which were constantly being further subdivided.<sup>1</sup> And it can hardly be maintained that the English landowners were, from their own point of view, ill-advised in attempting to avoid such a fate for their descendants. Moreover, it was by maintaining the family influence intact in one strong hand that lucrative posts were obtained for the younger brothers in Church and State, and the Family was enabled to maintain its pre-eminence as a whole. So long as promotion in the various professions depended upon family influence it is probable that, generally speaking, the younger brothers benefited—if not as greatly as the elder—yet more than they would have done under the system of division. Bacon, as we have seen, attacked Primogeniture on the ground that it was fatal to the proper upbringing of the

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, p. 413.



eldest son, whose moral character was undermined by his certainty of succession. Sir Matthew Hale defends it on the correlative ground that, while it sacrifices the eldest son to a life of dignified leisure, the younger sons are forced to distinguish themselves in active life; and since his time the argument that it is the younger sons who really benefit by Primogeniture has frequently been repeated. Sometimes it is on the ground of character: by making an eldest son, it is said, you ensure that there is "only one fool in the family"; and there is just so much of truth in the paradox that it undoubtedly is easier for the man who *must* work to lead a useful life, than it is for the man who can choose whether he will work or not. The civilised world still wavers between two theories of education: the one, that life should be made easy; the other, that life should be left hard. The student of peoples, the sociologist or economist, sees that strength and progress are best attained by the people who can only maintain themselves by strenuous effort, and instances are not unknown of attempts to create artificial hardships as a spur to indolent races.<sup>1</sup> But the father who is far-seeing and strong-minded enough to choose this method of dealing with his younger sons as a deliberate policy, will hardly fail to give his first-born also the advantage of it.

<sup>1</sup> "Last century it was proposed by several economists that the chestnut trees of Corsica should be done away with, in order that the inhabitants might be forced to work; and for two years at the end of the eighteenth century it was actually prohibited to plant fresh trees of this species" (Demolins, *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, p. 174).

Generally speaking, however, the argument that Primogeniture is for the benefit of the younger sons has been based upon an economic rather than an ethical principle. It is the family influence, maintained by accumulating the wealth of the Family in the hands of one man, which is to secure the fortunes of the younger brothers, either by establishing them in comfortable sinecures with assured incomes, or by opening out to them a career where even a moderate amount of energy and ability must reap a rich harvest. And this function of Primogeniture has extended beyond the days of feudalism in its stricter sense. Brentano speaks of the eighteenth century as "the time of political corruption, of sinecures, of the distribution of richly endowed places in the Church, the civil service, and the army, not according to merit, but according to family connections . . . the eldest son inherited the estate; the inheritance of the younger sons consisted in the well-paid places and sinecures in Church and State."

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century much the same system prevailed or was thought to prevail. Writing in 1832, Colonel Perronet Thompson says: "On the law of Primogeniture there is no necessity to insist upon the fact, that ten thousand a year in the hands of one son would only be a thousand a year apiece in the hands of ten, and that this would not make the sum more than it was before.<sup>1</sup> But, in the first place, there is the direct consequence that the nine junior sons are injured by the rule; and, in the next, there

<sup>1</sup> He is referring to Chalmers's argument, quoted below.

is the indirect consequence—of vastly greater consequence to the public than the other—that the influence and power thus created in the hands of the eldest brother are employed to procure a maintenance for the younger brothers out of the pockets of the public. This is clearly the end and the organised plan of the system of Primogeniture: the ten thousand a year is to be concentrated in the hands of the eldest son, that it may act as a battering ram for procuring a thousand a year for each of the others, or as much of it as may be found practicable, by entry into the public pantry and appropriation of the victual that is therein" (*Exercises*, vol. ii. p. 177).

This theory of the deliberate organisation of Primogeniture seems to be derived by the author from an article in a French newspaper previously quoted by him, which reflects the whole spirit of the French Revolution in the view it takes of the English hierarchy: "The exercise of aristocratical power being attached to the possession of great landed property, it is easy to see that younger brothers can have no share in the real estate which may be left by their relatives at their decease. The descendants of an artistocratic family would, in fact, all sink into the ranks of the common people if they were to divide what is left by their relatives in equal shares. The eldest son therefore keeps to himself all the landed property, to which is attached the exercise of aristocratic power; and then he makes use of this power to get money for his younger brothers, at the expense of the working classes. It is a mistake to imagine



that in England all the property of a family in the higher orders goes exclusively to the eldest son. It is true he takes the landed property, which is exclusively the family estate. But the younger brothers have for their share rich livings in the Church, sinecures or places of some kind which the public is obliged to pay for; and all these are considered as part of the family property as much as the other. For there can never be too much pains taken to impress the fact, that the higher orders consider themselves as having a property, not only in the landed estates which they possess by direct title, but in the working classes besides, on whom they lay taxes as they please, and share the proceeds amongst themselves."<sup>1</sup>

There is a ring of class hatred about this not unnatural in a French writer at a time when the democratic principle was still struggling for existence against the reintroduction of the aristocracy; but it is, of course, a very inadequate analysis of a very complex society. So far as the younger brothers are concerned—and it is they in whom we are at present interested—it describes a system which had been so long rooted in English society that it had come to be regarded as natural and inevitable, and it was perhaps a real service to call attention to it, even by means of exaggeration. The evils inherent in the system had only been obvious in cases of glaring incompetency, while it might be argued with some show of truth that the educated sons of the upper classes were

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Perronet Thompson, vol. i. pp. 176-77.

likely to be at least as competent for the public service as any others. But as education ceased to be confined to the upper classes the argument lost what force it might have had ; while it became continually more obvious that for special services special training was needed of a kind not necessarily included in the ordinary education of a gentleman. Special and arduous training is incumbent to-day in most branches of the public service, irrespective of the rank of the aspirant ; but under the Stuarts flagrant incompetency was no bar to the holding of lucrative posts in Army and Navy : “ In the year 1672 the French Government determined to educate young men of good family from a very early age, especially for the sea service. But the English Government, instead of following this excellent example, not only continued to distribute high naval commands among landsmen, but selected for such commands landsmen who, even on land, could not safely have been put in any important trust. Any lad of noble birth, any dissolute courtier for whom one of the King’s mistresses would speak a word, might hope that a ship of the line, and with it the honour of the country and the lives of hundreds of brave men, would be committed to his care. It mattered not that he had never in his life taken a voyage except on the Thames, that he could not keep his feet in a breeze, that he did not know the difference between latitude and longitude. No previous training was thought necessary.”<sup>1</sup>

The good things of the Church have generally been

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i.

regarded as peculiarly liable to appropriation by the younger members and dependants of noble families ; but there was a considerable period in the history of the Church when it afforded comparatively few lucrative positions, and it speaks ill for the disinterestedness of her service that during that period it was held to be unfitting the consideration of a gentleman except in the higher ranks of dignitaries.

“The place of the clergyman in society had been completely changed by the Reformation. Before that event, ecclesiastics had formed the majority of the House of Lords, had, in wealth and splendour, equalled, and sometimes outshone, the greatest of the temporal barons, and had generally held the highest civil offices. Many of the Treasurers, and almost all the Chancellors of the Plantagenets were Bishops. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and the Master of the Rolls were ordinarily Churchmen. Churchmen transacted the most important diplomatic business. Indeed, all that large portion of the administration which rude and warlike nobles were incompetent to conduct was considered as especially belonging to divines. Men, therefore, who were averse to the life of camps, and who were, at the same time, desirous to rise in the State, commonly received the tonsure. Among them were sons of all the most illustrious families, and near kinsmen of the throne, Scroops and Nevilles, Bouchiers, Staffords and Poles. To the religious houses belonged the rents of immense domains, and all that large portion of the tithe which is now in the hands of laymen. Down to the middle of the reign



of Henry the Eighth, therefore, no line of life was so attractive to ambitious and covetous natures as the priesthood. Then came a violent revolution. The abolition of the monasteries deprived the Church at once of the greater part of her wealth, and of her predominance in the Upper House of Parliament. . . . The clergy had lost the ascendancy which is the natural reward of superior mental cultivation. . . . The spiritual character not only ceased to be a qualification for high civil office, but began to be regarded as a disqualification. Those worldly motives, therefore, which had formerly induced so many able, aspiring, and high-born youths to assume the ecclesiastical habit, ceased to operate. Not one parish in two hundred then afforded what a man of family considered as a maintenance. There were still, indeed, prizes in the Church; but they were few, and even the highest were mean, when compared with the glory which had once surrounded the princes of the hierarchy. . . . Thus the sacerdotal office lost its attraction for the higher classes. During the century which followed the accession of Elizabeth scarce a single person of noble descent took orders. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second two sons of Peers were Bishops, four or five sons of Peers were Priests, and held valuable preferments; but these rare exceptions did not take away the reproach which lay on the body. The clergy were regarded as, on the whole, a plebeian class; and, indeed, for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i.

It would be interesting to trace the process by which the Church became once more rehabilitated as a suitable profession for "younger sons," and pleasant to think that the period of probation had led directly to a more disinterested service. But that was not to come till later. Macaulay attributes the change in its first stages to purely mercenary causes: "In the eighteenth century the great increase in the value of benefices produced a change. The younger sons of the nobility were allured back to the clerical profession. Warburton, in a letter to Hurd, dated the 5th of July 1752, mentions this change, which was then recent: 'Our grandees have at last found their way back into the Church. I only wonder they have been so long about it. But be assured that nothing but a new religious revolution, to sweep away the fragments that Henry the Eighth left after banqueting his courtiers, will drive them out again.'"

But though the increasing wealth might once more attract the younger sons, it seems to have been long before the office of clergyman completely regained its social estimation. Readers of Miss Austen will remember how the worldly heroine of *Mansfield Park* reproached the younger son, whose father had procured him a comfortable living, with the prospect of a better one to follow. "Oh, no doubt he is very sincere in preferring an income ready made to the trouble of working for one, and has the best intention of doing nothing all the rest of his days but eat, drink, and grow fat. It is indolence, Mr. Bertram,

indeed. Indolence and love of ease—a want of all laudable ambition, of taste for good company, or of inclination to take the trouble of being agreeable, which make men clergymen. A clergyman has nothing to do but to be slovenly and selfish—read the newspaper, watch the weather, and quarrel with his wife. His curate does all the work, and the business of his own life is to dine.”

But Miss Austen’s gentle irony, contrasted as it is with the loftier view which the hero himself takes of his profession, is only a faint reflection of the bitter contempt and antagonism which accompanied the awakening of the democratic spirit in England. It is worth while to illustrate this phase of feeling further, partly because of the influence it could hardly fail to have upon the fortunes of the younger brothers of to-day, and partly to emphasise the magnitude of the change which has taken place. Every generation has one or more of the men who make it their difficult and ungracious task to expose to the public gaze abuses which are apt to pass unnoticed except by those who benefit by them. This they may do with the moderation which carries conviction, or with the invective which makes the disinterested reader suspect even the integrity of statistics. That the writer of the *Extraordinary Black Book* (1831) is not free from prejudice seems obvious, but it is impossible to question the basis of truth in his accusations. “One of the greatest abuses in the disposal of patronage,” he writes, “is *monopoly* in a few individuals of



influence and connection, sharing among them the most valuable emoluments of the Church. In all spiritual offices and dignities there is great difference in value, and also in patronage; and the great object of ecclesiastical intrigue is to secure not only the most valuable, but the greatest number of preferments. Hence arises the present disposition of Church property. Scarcely any preferment is held *single*, the sees, dignities, rectories, and vicarages being mostly held with other good things, and the most monopolised by the relations and connections of those who have the disposal of them, namely, the Crown, the Bishops, and Aristocracy. The bishops are frequently archdeacons and deans, rectors, vicars, and curates, besides holding professorships, clerkships, prebends, precentorships, and other offices in cathedrals. Their sons, sons-in-law, brothers, and nephews are also pushed in to the most valuable preferments in the diocese." He then quotes the case of a bishop, who with his son and son-in-law held twelve offices and preferments, to the value of £31,645. Again: "The late Archbishop Sutton is an eminent instance of the perversion of ecclesiastical patronage. The Suttons remaining in the Church are very numerous; among seven of them are shared sixteen rectories, vicarages, and chapelries, besides preacherhips and dignities in Cathedrals. Of the *eleven* daughters of the Archbishop several had the prudence to marry men in holy orders, who soon became amply endowed. Hugh Percy, son of the Earl of Beverley, married one daughter, and in the course of about as many years was portioned off

with eight different preferments, estimated to be worth £10,000 per annum.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not only the appropriation of Church preferment by the aristocracy which arouses the indignation of our author; he denounces the whole system of Primogeniture out of which it has arisen. “Other evils result from this feudal institution. Primogeniture enriches one, and leaves all the other members of a family destitute. Hence they are thrown, like mendicants, on the public for support; but they are unlike mendicants in this, that the public has no option whether they will support them or not. The aristocracy, usurping the power of the State, have the means, under various pretexts, of extorting for the junior branches of their families a forced subsistence. They patronise a ponderous and sinecure church establishment; they wage long and unnecessary wars to create employments in the army and navy; they conquer and retain useless colonies; they set on foot expensive missions of diplomacy, and keep an ambassador or consul, and often both, at almost every petty State and petty port in the world; they create offices without duties, grant unmerited pensions, keep up unnecessary places in the royal household, in the admiralty, the treasury, the customs, excise, courts of law, and every department of the public administration; by these and other expedients the junior as well as elder branches of the great families are amply provided for out of the taxes. They live in profusion and luxury, and those by whom they

<sup>1</sup> *The Extraordinary Black Book*, p. 23.

are maintained alone subsist in indigence and privation.”<sup>1</sup>

It would probably be hard to find in any section of the community to-day a feeling of resentment to equal this, with its incapacity to distinguish between the persistence of old customs and traditions and deliberate and designing selfishness. The constitution of our whole social fabric and the iniquities of the capitalist are now the objects against which the reformer launches his invectives; and though Primogeniture still prevails, and younger brothers still have to be provided for, we hear little of the abuses of privilege and influence. The change has come about without any revolution such as Warburton predicted, but is none the less real because due to the pressure of public opinion and a deeper sense of responsibility. The very means by which the reform has been achieved is now falling into disrepute, so far has the old state of things fallen into oblivion. Much has been said of late against the prevalence of the system of examination, and its ineffectiveness as a means of selecting the best men; and yet it is chiefly by means of examination that the professions and public appointments have been removed from the deadening influence of patronage, and more or less thrown open to all classes.

Before passing to conjecture what becomes of “younger sons,” now that they can no longer rely solely upon family influence, it is interesting to note the more thoughtful and less one-sided view taken by

<sup>1</sup> *The Extraordinary Black Book*, p. 202.



some writers of the situation at the beginning of the last century. Malthus, writing in 1820, says: "If from the abolition of the law of primogeniture the landed fortunes were all very inconsiderable, it is not probable that there would be many large capitals among merchants, and in this case much productive power would unquestionably be lost." (His argument is that merchants are led on to accumulate wealth by their desire to compete with the large landed proprietor, perhaps an unnecessarily subtle way both of accounting for the merchant's activity and of justifying the landed proprietor.) "But however this may be, it is certain that a very large body of what may be called the middle classes of society has been established in this country, while the law of primogeniture, by forcing the younger sons of the nobility and great landed proprietors into the higher division of these classes, has, for all practical purposes, annihilated the distinctions founded on rank and birth, and opened the fairest arena for the contests of personal merit in all the avenues to wealth and knowledge. It is probable that the obligations generally imposed upon younger sons to be the founders of their own fortunes has imposed a greater degree of energy and activity into professional and commercial exertions than would have taken place if property in land had been more equally divided."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to reconcile this view of the annihilation of distinction founded upon birth and rank with the state of patronage at the time when it was written,

<sup>1</sup> *Pol. Economy*, p. 379.

and it is doubtful whether for generations to come it can really be the case that the lad of obscure birth will have as good a chance in starting on his career as the lad of "good family." It is much gained that he has *a* chance; but the mere fact that his friends and family are unfamiliar with the circumstances and details of life in the higher professional ranks will place him at a disadvantage as compared with the lad whose friends have for generations been engaged in similar work, and who know every detail of what is open to him, and how he must set about preparing himself.

Another writer, the famous Dr. Chalmers, propounds an ingenious scheme for preserving the system then in force (1832), while yet depriving it of injustice. "We know," he writes, "that there is a mighty force of sentiment and natural affection arrayed against the law of primogeniture. But here is the way in which we should appease those feelings and make compensation for the violence done to them. We would make no inroad on the integrity of estates; or for the sake of a second brother take off a portion, to the extent of a thousand a year, from that domain of ten thousand a year, which devolved by succession on the eldest son of the family. We should think it vastly better if, by means of a liberal provision in all the branches of the public service, a place of a thousand a year lay open to the younger son, whether in the law, or in the Church, or in colleges, or in the army, or in some other well-appointed establishment, kept up for the good and interest of the nation. We

would still have the estate to support the younger branches; yet that, not by the violation of its integrity, but by a more severe taxation than our politicians of the present day have the courage to impose. Under the one system the second brother would have his thousand a year, but give no return for it in any kind of service. Under the other system he would also have his thousand a year, and the public have the benefit of a duty and service from him to the bargain." But though the landowners are to be heavily taxed to support a service in which their younger brothers may find lucrative employment, the benefit is not to be confined to these. "It will not for a moment be imagined, that, while we would apportion a much larger amount of the nation's wealth to the objects of public service, we contend for any hereditary or family right to that portion, on the part of the younger brothers of our aristocracy. It should lie open to all the worth and talent which may exist in any quarter of society." In short, Chalmers seems to have had in mind something not unlike what has actually come about under the unintentional combination of the succession duties and competitive examinations.

So far, however, as concerns provision for the younger brothers, it hardly seems that the heavier taxation of the landed proprietor has had the effect of increasing the numbers employed in the public service. It is difficult to get any accurate or certain information as to how far the "younger brothers" of the present day are earning a living, or how far they



continue to be an unprofitable charge upon the family estate, or how far, again, they are provided for in the public services by means of family influence rather than their own merits. An examination of Burke's Peerage and Baronetage (1899) seems to show that comparatively few are in the public services at all. The Church, for instance, seems to have fallen again into disrepute as a career for the "younger brother," for out of 867 younger sons born before 1880 we find only 30 in holy orders. The army is much more popular, and 269 either are serving or have served in some military capacity. It must be borne in mind, however, that, except in the higher ranks, the profession of an officer in the army is not a lucrative one, and that the majority of those who follow it must be regarded rather as volunteers than as burdens upon the public funds. The remaining services fare little better than the Church. The following table sets out the occupations (as stated in the Peerage) of eldest and younger sons respectively :—

	Eldest Sons.	Younger Sons.
Army . . . . .	325	269
Navy . . . . .	8	39
Law . . . . .	24	35
Church . . . . .	5	30
Medicine . . . . .	1	5
Civil, Diplomatic, and Consular Service	15	18
Emigrated . . . . .	1	2
Other professions or business . . . . .	3	1
No calling . . . . .	236	475
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	618	874
Counted twice . . . . .	7	7
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	611	867

With regard to sons of spiritual lords, there is little indication of the wrongful use of patronage :—

	Eldest Sons.	Younger Sons.
Army . . . . .	2	3
Law . . . . .	4	3
Church . . . . .	4	10
C.D.C. Service . . . . .	0	1
No calling . . . . .	20	35
	—	—
	30	52

The most striking feature about this table is the large proportion of younger sons who are represented as having no calling. It is hardly to be supposed that both they and their still more numerous sisters are all of them living entirely at the charge of the family estate; and the more sanguine view to take is, that many of them have entered into the arena of professional or commercial life in capacities which are not considered sufficiently dignified for the pages of a Peerage. It is certainly remarkable that so few should be entered as having pursued other than the conventional lines. Wealthy marriages no doubt account for some; and even in the case of the genuinely “unemployed” it must not be assumed that none of them are rendering services in exchange for their maintenance. The greater part of the local and imperial government of the country is still carried on by strenuous voluntary work, and of this work a considerable part is done by members of the “leisured” class.

It is probable that if we were able to push the inquiry further and examine the families of those

“ landed gentry ” who are not of sufficient rank to be admitted into the Peerage, nor wealthy enough to have been made baronets, we should find a much larger proportion of younger sons who have been stimulated by their position into eminence in professional or commercial pursuits. So far as this is the case, and so far as they owe their success more to their own abilities and enterprise than to patronage and influence, they are typical rather of the Modern Family, the characteristics and functions of which will occupy the remainder of this book.

But the most characteristic survivals of the feudal Family are not the sons but the daughters of the house. In feudal days, as we have seen, there were three courses only open to them : marriage, the cloister, or a corner in the eldest brother's house. In families where the aristocratic tradition still prevails, the position is not greatly altered. The main difference is, that at the death of the father it is more usual now for the unmarried daughters, like the younger sons, to receive their portions and to seek a life of their own instead of lingering on in the ancestral home. For many of them, in the absence of either family cares or professional work, their solitary lives are little less confined and narrow than they would have been in a convent; and it is perhaps not wonderful that this generation has devised a modernised form of the convent in the great Anglican sisterhoods, where so many women now seek an imitation of the family and industrial life which they fail to find in the real world. In the modern Family of the



best type the daughters are prepared for a career as naturally as the sons, and have no need to seek out artificial refuges; but for women new ideas and new principles work always slower than for men, and a far larger proportion are still subject to feudal conditions. In France this is even more strikingly the case than in England; although it is true that many Frenchwomen have achieved complete and successful economic freedom, the numbers who are still in subjection to traditional convention is very large. "To find out what becomes of the French demoiselle we must refer to statistics. In 1900 no less than sixty-four thousand women were immured for life within convent walls." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miss Betham-Edwards, *Home Life in France*, p. 131.



PART II

THE MODERN FAMILY






## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BASIS OF THE MODERN FAMILY

MANY of those who are interesting themselves in the study of social questions and the structure of society at the present day are of opinion that the Family as an institution has played its part, and must now yield its functions into other hands. They see the change which has come over its organisation in many places only as the change of dissolution; they fix their attention upon the type to which Le Play gave the name of the "unstable Family," and note its degeneracy, and fail to recognise that it is in no sense representative of the modern Family in its true and most characteristic type.

This distinction between the degenerate, unstable Family and the typical modern Family is an essential one. It is not merely a question of how long the members of a Family continue to live together in one house; superficially the two types may be much alike in this respect. It is one of the proofs of the strength of the modern Family that it is able to send its sons and daughters far over the face of the earth without in the least impairing the bond which unites them; while it is one of the proofs of



the weakness of the degenerate Family that there is no bond to hold them together at all, or a bond so slender that removal into the next street is enough to sever it. The real nature of the distinction can only become clear as we study the characteristics of the modern Family at its best.

One aspect of this distinction is illustrated by the following quotation from M. Demolins' *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*: "This type of Family," (i.e. the unstable) "is the natural product of the disaggregation of family communities. Under the régime of the community the tendency is to remain grouped round the land of the Family or the *héritier-associé* . . . under the régime of the unstable Family, the children tend to leave the home as soon as possible, to establish themselves in separate households. So far, this type would seem to be changing towards the particularist Family, but it presents one fundamental difference from this. In the particularist Family the children have been previously formed to suffice for themselves and by themselves, no matter in what profession; to be equal to any situation; to undertake with equal energy, and often with equal success, the most different kinds of work, whether of colonist, manufacturer, or merchant. But in the unstable Family there is no *formation énergique*. They are not trained to obedience, to respect of the paternal authority, to the spirit of economy, as in the family community. Nor are they trained to individual initiative, to zeal for work, to progressive methods, as in the particularist Families. Thus they leave



the home without having previously acquired the aptitudes necessary to succeed by themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

The one characteristic which the essentially modern Family has in common with the unstable or broken-down Family is, that it is not held together by the possession of, or attachment to, a particular piece of land. We have sufficiently dwelt upon the enormous influence which property in land, however small, has upon the organisation of the Family; we now have to consider whether any similar influences remain for a people amongst whom property in land has become so exceptional as to be practically of no importance. Is it the case that when the Family has no property, or only property of such a nature that each member can if he will walk away with his share in his pocket, the Family ceases to be a reality? or are there other forces and connecting links which preserve its strength, though under another form?

Now the influence of the land, as we have seen, is strongest in preserving the unity and continuance of the Family when it forms an industrial basis for the combined work of the various members of the Family. The typical family community is one which is held together by a common industry in which each member can partake, according to his strength or capacity; and the industry which most readily lends itself to the co-operation of a number of persons of differing age or sex is farming and the cultivation of land. In it there is work for all capacities; the weakest can contribute something, the most stupid

<sup>1</sup> *Les Français d'aujourd'hui*, pp. 134, 135.

can give his strength, and the most able can find scope for his skill and organising power. And so it becomes possible to carry into industry the principle of family life, that each gives according to his powers and receives according to his needs. Moreover, and this is important for the question before us, this industrial unity of the Family means that its members are stronger in combination than they would be apart; a real gain is effected by the assignment of work to those most fitted to do it, and thus there is a genuine economic force to hold the Family together.

Is there anything corresponding to this in our modern community; any industrial basis for family life? or is it true that this kind of co-operation has been entirely swept away in a manufacturing country such as England?

If we look to the landowners themselves it seems clear that, in the higher ranks, at any rate, the land no longer affords—if indeed it ever did—an industrial basis for the family life; many an old Family which has disappeared might have held together much longer if its members could have treated their estate as a business to be carried on by their own energy and capacity. Amongst the farming class I do not know how far it may be the case that farming is still a family industry; but it is generally said that the farmer's sons and daughters are no more content to find their occupation on the farm than the sons of the landed proprietor to carry on the business of the estate. But amongst agricultural labourers the

case is somewhat different. It still remains true that the land demands such variety of work as is most readily afforded by the Family, and the man whose Family contains a certain number of women and lads stands a better chance of getting work, or will get better work, than the solitary man who has only his own labour to offer. "In Northumberland and Durham a great many women are employed at work in the fields. They are usually the daughters of the men who are hired by the year, the system being for the farm servants to be hired by families, the sons and daughters living with their parents in cottages let free and situated on the farm, and all working on the same farm. Men with daughters who are able to work are always sought after, and a man with several daughters can command a higher wage than a man who has none."<sup>1</sup> Thus there is still a definite economic inducement to the members of the agricultural Family to hold together; there is an industrial basis. If the movement towards small holdings should happily continue to gain force in England, it is probable that amongst small holders also the Family will become a genuinely industrial community, finding occupation of various kinds for its members in the management of the holding. This is notably so in the Channel Islands, where much of the land is held by small proprietors and very highly cultivated.

The first step away from the agricultural family community is found where the industry is not

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Wages of Agricultural Labourers*, 1905, p. 14.



sufficient to occupy all members of the Family profitably, and some are employed as wage-earners outside, though their earnings are still contributed to the common stock. This is generally the case where the Family is within reach of some manufacturing or mining centre, and may mean a much more prosperous condition than where it is dependent upon agricultural pursuits alone. One great advantage of it is, that it combines the advantages of city with those of country life, ensures a country upbringing for the children, and keeps open the possibility of country pursuits for those members of the Family who are more fitted for them. I believe that on the Continent this combination of town and country life is common; in England the best chance of attaining it would seem to lie in the removal of industries from the great centres of population into the country.

In the days of "domestic industry" this industrial co-operation of the Family was common in manufacture as well as in agriculture; and all its members would be engaged under the control of its head in the production of some article of commerce. But it is seldom that any manufacture can afford the same variety of occupation as in agriculture, the co-operation would be of a less effective nature, and it was easily broken down when machinery and steam power made it profitable to organise the workers into great armies, banded together into groups where the

individuals are repetitions of each other instead of being complementary factors. It was perhaps inevitable that such a widespread shifting in the industrial grouping of the people should, for a time and to a limited extent, have shaken the Family itself; but it is no longer true, at any rate in England, that the unstable Family with its derelicts is mainly to be found amongst the manufacturing people. The family group has, on the whole, successfully withstood the shock of the change and reorganised itself on another basis.

—Where domestic industry still lingers, mainly amongst the “sweated” industries, we find the family co-operation persisting, but in a degraded form, and consisting for the most part in the employment of children at work which is in no sense especially adapted to their strength and powers. But there is one most important branch of industrial co-operation which still prevails in the great majority of Families in nearly all ranks of society; it is that which assigns to the wife the function of manager and spender of the family income and the care of the home and children, while the husband and adult children take the responsibility of providing the income. It is an arrangement which is sometimes abandoned at both extremes of society; wealthy women will sometimes devolve their functions upon housekeepers, nurses, and governesses; poor women will sometimes abandon them to become wage-earners themselves. But the belief is very strong, and is probably justified, that in such a case

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wage earners

X the efficiency of the Family is always liable to be impaired, and generally is greatly impaired; and it is certain that where the wife abandons the home for outside work or pleasure the bonds which hold the Family together become of the slightest. But I believe that amongst the wage-earners at any rate there is an increasing tendency for women to devote themselves more exclusively to the work of house-keeping. Generally speaking, they expect to have, and they get, the entire management of the family income; in many cases determining even the amount which the wage-earners—husbands, sons, and daughters alike—may reserve for their own use before handing over the money to her. And both they and their husbands know that their services in the home are far more valuable, even from an economic point of view, than if they were themselves earning. I cannot refrain from quoting in this context the saying of a poor woman of whom Miss Loane writes in her beautiful book, *The Queen's Poor*. She had allowed herself to be forced into the position of wage-earner: "I'll regret it once, and that's all my life . . . there's only one rule for women who want to have a decent home for their children and themselves. If your husband comes home crying, and says he can't find any work, sit down on the other side of the fire and cry till he *does*."

In the course of an inquiry amongst the secretaries of Trade Unions I have come across one great industry in which a simple type of family co-operation prevails



to a very large extent. Amongst coal-miners in many districts it is almost universally customary for fathers and sons to work together; and men who have sons to co-operate with them are considered to have a distinct economic advantage over men who have not. There may be different reasons for this in different parts of the country; in some places it is a housing question, in others no reason is given for the fact, which is simply stated. In Derbyshire "a man with sons will get employed easier than a man without." In Northumberland a man with working sons will more readily get employment than a man without sons working: "In this district the miner has a free house and fire coal. But as there is not a sufficient number of these free houses for the number of workmen employed, the man with working sons always gets the first house vacant." In Cumberland the advantage seems to be due to a different cause: "Fathers may obtain a considerable advantage by their sons if they take them with them as co-partners, which is generally done. The colliery company might only pay a lad 3s. a day for a job, and if the father is a good skilled workman he might take the son with him, and they might earn two full men's wages, which is often done." In South Wales, again, co-operation between fathers and sons is very largely the custom.

So far as I have been able to trace, there is no other considerable industry in which co-operation in the same work exists as a force to hold the members

of a Family together. But if we pass now from this *industrial* co-operation, we find another kind of co-operation, which I will call, to distinguish it from the former, *economic*, and which is so prevalent amongst the Fish wage-earners as to be typical at any rate of the very large section. I refer to the co-operation which consists in contributions from the wage-earners of the Family towards the maintenance of the common household. The earnings may be derived from entirely different sources, the wage-earners may be working at different trades, or at the same trade, but they have a common end in view—the maintenance of the Family in a state of efficiency. It is very far from being the case that in a typical working-class Family the children leave the home as soon as they are able to support themselves. Whenever we get a collection of genuine family histories, as distinct from bald statements of “man’s earnings,” we find numerous instances where there are children of working age living at home and contributing their share towards the maintenance of younger and older members; the Family thus fulfilling one of its true economic functions of utilising the strong to support the weak. A few typical cases may be cited in illustration of this position—the first two are taken from the Budgets published by the Economic Club in 1896, the others from Schulze Gaevernitz’s *History of the Cotton Industry* :—

1. Man and wife, son of 22 contributing 15s., daughter of 19 paying for her board, son of 17 contributing 6s., daughter of 13 not earning.

2. Man and wife, son of 22 contributing 10s., daughter giving 7s., and daughter aged 14 not earning. Also two married sons living away who are "good and kind," and two married daughters, one of whom delayed marriage several years in order to help at home.

3. Man and wife, and seven children, eldest 18. Four are working in the same factory as their father. The man's yearly earnings are £98, the children's are £93, and these together form the family income.

4. Man and wife, and seven children aged 18 to 31. Man's earnings £45, children's £168.

5. Man and wife, six children from 14 to 23 years. Man earns 24s. a week, but is much out of work; the children earn £172 : 4s. in the year.

6. Next, the family of a miner in Northumberland : man and wife, eight children from 2 to 21 ; income of father £90, of the two eldest sons £97.

7. Finally, a machine fitter in London : man and wife, six children from 6 to 17 ; man earns £105, the older children £45.

Cases such as these are not exceptional, but could be multiplied indefinitely by any one familiar with the structure of normal working-class life. The co-operation which they illustrate is very strong evidence against the alleged disintegration of the Family ; can it also be regarded as a positive tie, tending to hold the Family together ? From one point of view it may no doubt be maintained that the claims upon the earnings of the young people tend rather to drive them away from



home; that they naturally prefer a life of independence in which they may spend their whole earnings upon their own comfort or pleasures, to a life in which the claims of the household must be satisfied before any surplus can be applied to personal gratification. Numerous cases occur, of course, which justify this view to some extent; nevertheless it is one-sided, and overlooks a whole range of considerations which affect human nature far more deeply than the mere desire for personal gratification. And it also overlooks the simple economic fact that the individual members of the Family get far less value for their money when they spend it *as units*, when, that is, they are their own housekeepers, than they do as members of a well-organised household, when they share in the services of a skilful housekeeper.

But more important than this economic consideration is the fact that in the normal Family, where even an average amount of mutual consideration and affection has prevailed, the child's main interests and pleasures are centred in or gather around the family group. They are not confined to it; the school life and school companions, later on work and work companions, afford interests which may become competing, but which normally are complementary. But the home is the centre, both in a material and moral sense, from which he starts each day afresh, and to which each day takes him back at night. Were there no deeper influence at work this merely physical fact would in itself constitute a habit of mind and body of great effect. But the mind of the child is

even more deeply rooted in the Family as its centre ; his earliest words, ideas, modes of thought, are those he gathers from parents and brethren ; and each day he takes back to them the new words and ideas which he gathers in the outside world, and they again are moulded and interpreted by the Family. He recounts his exploits, tells of his companions and teachers, is subjected to praise or criticism, and listens to similar narratives from other members ; and next day he returns to the outside world to collect fresh material to be thrown into the Family mould. Even in Families where there is less than the normal show of affection, the habits formed in this way are so strong that they do not break without some special stress being put upon them. When the authority of the parents has been wisely and not harshly maintained, another powerful influence is present to hold the young folk under the shelter of their guidance and experience ; and when the crowning joy of family life is added in the mutual affection which comes of joys and sorrows shared in common, and of tender care repaid with loving gratitude, then nothing short of the love of man for woman, the love which demands a new Family, is strong enough to loosen the bonds of the old.

And even this will often not prevail at once where the needs of the old Family are such as to constitute a serious claim. The boy (or girl) who contributes from his first earnings towards the family income does so with pride ; he feels that his position has approximated to that of the head of the Family ; the

claim upon him is regarded as a privilege rather than a burden. And if the claim is not pressed tyrannically or selfishly, this attitude towards it persists long after the freshness of novelty is worn off; the first childish pleasure passes into a sense of duty which is no more oppressive than any other duty in life, and the strengthening sense of responsibility for the weaker members of the Family becomes gradually too firmly rooted to be broken down by any desire for any mere personal gratification. The very fact of the claim being made is far more powerful to hold the Family together than to disintegrate it.

The sharing in a common responsibility must count, then, as a strong influence in holding the Family together; and will help to explain what I believe to be a fact, that amongst the wage-earners the claims of the Family are frequently even more fully recognised than amongst the more prosperous middle-class, where the dangers of poverty are more remote, and where the young people are seldom called upon to contribute towards the maintenance of the household.

Finally, we may ask, Is there, in the modern Family, anything to correspond to the family tradition which arises in connection with the possession of land, and which we have seen to be such a powerful factor in preserving the unity and continuity of an "old" Family?

What is needed to support such a tradition is some permanent interest, with which the family name may be connected, and in which successive generations



may share ; something, in short, which corresponds to the "cult" of the old patriarchal Family. Such an interest does exist, and to a very large extent, in the work in which the Family is engaged. When for generation after generation son succeeds to father in his occupation, all the conditions for establishing an old tradition are present ; the pride of good workmanship, no less noble than the pride of great deeds, becomes a family heirloom ; the family name becomes known and respected within the limits of the trade ; and the inheritance of skill and experience and knowledge upon which each generation enters afresh has the great advantage over material property that no system of Primogeniture is required to keep it intact, since it may be shared in freely by all the sons without suffering diminution.

But does this continuity of work really exist to any considerable extent in the modern Family ? I have no hesitation in affirming that it does, in varying degrees, but amongst almost all classes. In trade and commerce and banking, the great "houses," with their long traditions, are too well known to need mentioning. In the professions there would seem to be less definite continuity as between the various branches, though it may be regarded almost as a matter of course that the sons of professional men will themselves enter one or another of the professions. And the following extract from an article by Bishop Welldon, on the "Children of the Clergy,"<sup>1</sup> seems to indicate a considerable amount of specialised con-

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1906.

tinuity. The article is primarily in exaltation of members of the clerical profession, but it serves to illustrate the point. He explains how he has examined the parentage of every person entered in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "and if I confine myself to the centuries succeeding the Reformation, during which the Protestant clergy have been allowed to marry, it is safe to assert not only that the clerical profession has sent out an immense number of children who, according to the language of the Bidding prayer in the ancient universities, have 'served God both in church and state' with success and distinction, but that no other profession has sent out so many children equally successful and equally distinguished. . . . It is a reasonable expectation that children will be found to attain their preponderant distinction in the profession of their fathers, and the *Dictionary of National Biography* bears it out. The continuous renown of such families as the Yorkes and Coleridges in the law, of the Wordsworths and the Summers in the Church, of the Darwins in science, of the Arnolds in literature, is familiar to students of modern English life. As literary men have been in large proportions the sons of literary men, politicians of politicians, lawyers of lawyers, and actors of actors, so have clergymen habitually been born and bred in clerical homes. I find then as many as 350 names of more or less well-known men who have not only been sons of clergymen, but have themselves been clergymen."

It seems possible that some of the superior efficiency

as parents which is here claimed for the clergy may have been due at one time to the system of church patronage already referred to; but that would only be one of the causes tending to an hereditary occupation. The point is, that it does exist to a large extent.

But it is perhaps when we come to the industrial classes, the people to whom their calling is their one great possession, that the tendency to continuity is most marked. It is especially striking when the supply of labour is highly organised, and something like the conditions of a monopoly have been established. Here we find all the characteristics of an aristocracy repeating themselves: the same exclusiveness and family pride, and the same uninterrupted succession of generation to generation. It is in the old days of the "crafts" that we find this continuity of labour best illustrated, just as it is in the old days that we find the most extreme form of the feudal Family based upon property; and the following extract from *The Baxter Books of St. Andrews* gives two good instances:—

"... There were several remarkable families—remarkable for the long period in which their members were associated with the craft. It is not surprising that the connection in several instances should have been a very long one, when it is remembered that to succeed to the right of entry into a craft was almost equivalent to a down-setting for life. Very frequently the eldest son was devoted to his father's trade, whilst the younger ones had to branch off into other pur-



suits. The craft was a wider family. Many of the members were united by blood, many by marriage. The means of communication between the inhabitants of a city and other districts were few in number and rudimentary in character. There was a strong tendency for men to remain in the place of their nativity, to marry with neighbours' daughters, and to trade and associate with those whom they had known from boyhood. For generation after generation the rights of membership were handed down with as much care, and doubtless as much pride, as was the inheritance in landed property in higher circles. I have casually instanced the Honeymans. They, the Duncansons, and the Arthurs were the most prominent families. The two former ran each other very close in the duration of their trade dynasties, and as far as our records can assist us, the advantage lies with the Honeymans to the comparatively trifling extent of twenty years in a period of nearly 210.

“The tables of these two families are interesting :—

1. John Honeyman	1st June 1564.
2. John Honeyman	19th Oct. 1591.
3. William Honeyman (son of No. 1)	17th Aug. 1598.
4. Andrew Honeyman (son of No. 1)	31st May 1609.
5. Robert Honeyman (son of John 2)	9th June 1619.
6. John Honeyman (son of John 2)	9th Dec. 1623.
7. John Honeyman (son of Andrew 4)	10th Sept. 1642.
8. Andrew Honeyman (son of John 6)	3rd Aug. 1647.
9. William Honeyman (son of John 7)	12th Sept. 1660.
10. John Honeyman (son of William 9)	30th May 1681.
11. Andrew Honeyman (son of John 10)	17th Aug. 1730.
12. Thomas Honeyman (son of Andrew 11)	14th June 1745.
13. Thomas Honeyman (son of Thomas 12)	3rd Sept. 1773.

“The Duncanson succession is as follows :—

Henry Duncanson	1st June 1564.
William Duncanson	1579.
Andrew Duncanson (son of Duncan)	12th Feb. 1596.
James Duncanson (son of William)	15th Dec. 1615.
John Duncanson (son of Andrew)	27th July 1619.
Peter Duncanson (son of Andrew)	9th Feb. 1639.
John Duncanson (son of Peter)	26th March 1675.
Peter Duncanson (son of Peter)	18th Sept. 1675.
James Duncanson (son of John)	10th Sept. 1697.
Peter Duncanson (son of Peter)	2nd July 1701.
Paul Duncanson (son of Peter)	16th Oct. 1717.
John Duncanson (son of James)	4th May 1721.
Paul Duncanson (son of Paul)	8th Sept. 1749.
Thomas Duncanson (son of John)	23rd May 1753.”

*The Baxter Books of St. Andrews*, p. lxxix. sq.

The bakers have ceased to be an organised craft, and so the genealogies find no record to-day ; but relics of the system are still abundant in other trades. “Barge-builders,” writes Mr. Burns, “are an ancient craft, and boast an ancestry of trade that would startle and eclipse the Percys and the De Veres.” The watermen and lightermen on the Thames afford a similar illustration. “I came across a case to-day, a man named Dudley, pierman and waterman at Battersea Park Pier” (how this recalls the Earl of Leicester and Queen Elizabeth in *Kenilworth* !). “His sons watermen, Dudley himself, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, licensed watermen also. Write or, better, go to Watermen’s Company Hall. Examine the registers and you will find for centuries the same names and families on the roll of membership.”

Acting upon this advice I went to the Hall, and

in that quaint old building found abundant confirmation. The exclusiveness of the calling is to some extent kept up by a Union amongst the men, and both the Union and the Court of the Company favour the apprenticeship of the sons and relations of members, though there is no rule against outsiders, and these are not infrequently admitted. But (it was explained to me) this is mostly in connection with the Family : a young member gets fond of a girl, and introduces her brother, and so on. Cases are so numerous of the trade running in families that the difficulty was rather to find exceptions than instances. Name after name was mentioned of men whose ancestors for generations had been watermen before them. Unfortunately the oldest registers had been destroyed by fire, but finally one was produced dating from early in the eighteenth century, and we ran over a few pages of it, noting the names of men whose descendants still remained on the books, and they were very numerous. Of those who have dropped out of the ranks some have risen to high social standing ; others have vanished, just as in the pages of Debrett or Burke old families disappear or become merged in others.

When we come to the less highly organised and exclusive trades it is difficult to prove the continuity for far back, because of the absence of genealogical records ; but that it exists to a large extent is sufficiently shown by the following statements which have been kindly furnished by the secretaries to the Unions in the various trades instanced :—



“*Hand-Frame Knitters.*—Yes, it is customary in our trade for the sons to follow the same employment as their fathers; the custom prevails to a very great extent. The oldest family that I can trace back in Calverton is the family of B. Thomas B. was born at Papplewick in the county of Notts in the year 1724, and followed the trade of hand-frame knitting; his son John was born at Papplewick in the year 1755, but migrated to Calverton in the county of Notts, and died in the year 1833. Seth B., son of John B., was born at Calverton in the year 1806, and died in the year 1882. John B., son of Seth B., although sixty-eight years of age, is still working at the trade; also several of his sons.”

“*French Polishers.*—Yes. I know a family named C. that have been in this industry for four generations.”

“*Type-Founders.*—It is customary in our trade for sons to follow the same employment as their fathers. Our late manager, Mr. J. N., also his brother W., were the second generation of N.’s having been type-founders. John N.’s son and grandson are working as type-founders still. There is also another instance of four generations having been type-founders, and that is the family of the late G. M. Mr. M. was at the time of his death a Justice of the Peace, and also had the distinction of being the only working man near E. who was ever appointed to hold the above office. My own grandfather was a type-founder, and the male members of our family with one exception have been type-founders for three generations. It is

quite a common thing to see father and son working in the same shop."

"*Papermakers.*—1. Stockport. It is customary for fathers to take their sons into the paper-mills with them as their assistants, and there are many instances at present of three generations working in the same mills. 2. Maidstone. Yes. We have families who have followed the same work for a hundred and fifty years."

"*Coopers.*—1. Edinburgh. It is customary for sons to follow their fathers: at present we have several families placed that way—three, four, and even five sons following their fathers in the trade. It is quite common for two generations, and in several cases we have even the third generation among us. 2. London. It is customary for sons to take to the same work as their fathers, and there are many instances of families who have followed the same work for several generations. I can't prove this, but believe there has been an Isaac R. a cooper for three or four hundred years." (The writer signs himself Isaac R.)

"*Printing-Machine Managers.*—In our branch of the printing trade many instances could be quoted of the son following the same branch as the father and the grandfather. At the present time we have many members whose fathers and grandfathers were members of the Trade Society."

"*Iron-Founders.*—It is customary for fathers to place their sons at the same trade: I have known the third and even the fourth generation to be engaged in the same trade."

“*Bricklayers*.—It certainly largely prevails. I have frequently worked with three generations in one family.”

“*Patternmakers*.—Ours is a comparatively modern industry. About fifty per cent follow their fathers’ trade, but seldom more than one son from one family.”

“*Tinplate Workers*.—1. The custom for sons to take to the same work as their fathers largely prevails, and there are instances of families having followed the trade for several generations. 2. I would say that a very large proportion take to the same work as their fathers in the iron and steel trades, and there are many instances of sons following fathers for several generations in the same employment.”

In the large localised industries this continuity of work is almost universal. Amongst the miners in all parts of the country generation follows generation with rare exceptions. In Northumberland some of the sons “are put to teaching or go to some trade. But you may take it that the large number go to the pits, as their fathers did before them. I am acquainted with many families that can trace back for four generations that their forefathers have worked in the pits.” In Cumberland, Durham, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and South Wales we find the custom universal. It is the same in the textile trades; and these two great industries alone include a large proportion of the workers of the country.



From a small minority of Unions I hear that it is not customary for sons to follow their father's work. In some cases definite reasons are assigned for it. One Association writes: "A very large number of the members themselves have so many disadvantages to contend with, that they make every effort to put their sons to some other trade"; and others as well cite the bad condition of the particular trade as a reason why sons are no longer following their fathers. But where the father has a skilled trade in which there are fair prospects for the future, it is the rule rather than the exception that he will pass it on to his son.

In the absence of a trade union it becomes increasingly difficult to show this continuity; but here and there one gets glimpses of facts which bear witness to it. "There are a great many shepherds in Northumberland, both on the low ground and among the Cheviot Hills, the whole of which are let in sheep farms. The great majority of these men in the Border districts are the sons, grandsons, or great-grandsons of shepherds. They are said to 'run in families,' and there are instances where a family has followed the calling of shepherd for many generations. Few men who have not been so bred and trained are to be found working as shepherds in these districts."<sup>1</sup>

The following case, which came under my notice recently, illustrates the continuity in one of the more humble branches of the ecclesiastical profession. An old widow, Mrs. A., was applying for a pension, and

<sup>1</sup> *Board of Trade Report on Wages of Agricultural Labourers*, p. 15.

based her claims upon her family record. She and her late husband had been for twenty-five years sexton and sextoness at a city church, where before marriage her husband had been pew-opener and bell-ringer. His father had been organ-blower in the same Parish church for fifty-six years, his uncle was Parish schoolmaster, and his grandfather had been Parish beadle, keeper of the fire-engine, and street keeper of the Parish in the days before policemen were thought of. A similar continuity existed in the family's secular employment; for Mr. A. had worked with the same firm as his father before him, and as also Mrs. A.'s father and brother. How strongly the family bond was felt is shown by the fact that Mrs. A., having no children of her own, adopted and brought up an orphan nephew of her husband's, with whom she now lives. This nephew is a book-keeper by trade, but has started a stationery shop in addition, to provide employment for his young daughters. His wife is much attached to old Mrs. A., and says they will always care for her, pension or no pension.

I think, then, it is no exaggeration to say, that wherever we find an industry of any degree of specialisation, as distinct from unskilled and un-specialised labour, there we may find to a greater or less extent a continuity of work binding the generations together, and affording a basis for continuous family life as real and firm, if not as tangible, as landed property itself.

Finally, underlying all others, there is one fundamental bond which I have not yet dwelt upon—it is the primitive instinctive attachment which, with rare exceptions, binds parent to child throughout the whole range of the animal world. It is sometimes called the maternal instinct, as if it were confined to the mother; but though the father may occasionally be more reticent in his demonstrations, it is very doubtful whether his feeling is not just as real and compelling in the first instance. Though the physical tie is not so close as that between the mother and her infant, yet the protective instinct of the strong towards the weak is perhaps even more strongly developed in the man than in the woman.

This elementary instinct forms one element, but only one, in the basis upon which the Family is built up. Unless it is supplemented and strengthened by other influences it is apt to wear away and suffer degradation as the children pass beyond the days of infancy and lose the first touching appeal of helplessness. It is notably so amongst the “unstable” Families, where the organising influences of the forces we have been considering never come into play. Yet even here the protective instinct will linger long after every other sign of affection seems to have vanished. Parents who will neglect and even ill-treat their children themselves, will furiously resent any approach to interference or ill-treatment from outsiders.

But the higher influences which form the main persisting strength of the typical modern Family tend to be entirely absent in the unstable Family;



it is, indeed, their absence which causes, and to a certain extent constitutes the instability, and differentiates it from the stable Family. If we take first industrial co-operation, we may look for it in vain amongst these Families except in the degraded form already referred to, in which the children are engaged in the sweated "home industries"; even the wife's function is hardly differentiated from that of the husband, and it is just as likely as not that she will be the principal wage-earner. Economic co-operation in its true sense also fails; the children's earnings may be impounded so long as they are young enough to submit, but the sense of mutual responsibility is undeveloped, and no claim is felt beyond the claim of superior force. Nothing is more noticeable to those who have been in touch with these unstable Families that even where the fathers themselves have been skilled artisans, they have neglected to ensure that their children were taught a trade, and have allowed them to drift into the ranks of "unskilled labour"—the ranks, that is, of those with no training aptitudes or skill to hand on to their children when the time comes. They are like the rich man who has dissipated the estate of the Family, and casts its members without resources adrift upon the world.

How these unstable Families have come to lose these organising influences is another question. M. Demolins would seem to hold (see p. 194) that they are the product of the disintegration of patriarchal Families, and that they are by race unfitted to achieve the strength of family life without the

families  
to children  
to women  
who are  
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support of the larger family community, and the family property behind them. But it would be hard to show that the wreckage of family life which exists in most of our large towns is for the most part racially different from the strongly organised community in and upon which they live, though where the Irish element is strong, as in Glasgow and Liverpool and certain quarters of London, it certainly contributes an unduly large share.

But if we go behind the question of race we find the same causes at work, both in the *disjecta membra* of the family communities which M. Demolins has in mind, and in the wreckage of our towns. In both cases the individual has been taught to rely upon other than his own strength—in the one upon the “family community,” in the other upon Poor Laws, charities, and other adventitious aids; in both cases the children lack the training which is necessary to their salvation: “They are not trained to obedience, to respect of parental authority, to the spirit of economy . . . nor are they trained to individual initiative, to zeal for work, to progressive methods.”

It is family life alone, with its claims and responsibilities, its continuity of interests and sympathies, which can reorganise these drifting atoms of humanity, and bring them back into the main current of social life; and, fortunately for humanity, the Family is an institution with an inveterate power of reasserting itself in the absence of unwise interference.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ECONOMIC FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY

WE have seen to what a considerable extent economic forces contribute towards strengthening the bonds of family life; we have now to consider some of the ways in which the Family is itself an economic force, and as such reacts upon the wealth and welfare of the community.

In the first place, we may say that amongst those sections of society where a living is only to be obtained by working for it—that is, amongst almost the whole of society—it is the institution of the Family which is the principal motive to work. “We have never yet estimated from the point of view of political economy,” writes Dr. Emanuel Hermann,<sup>1</sup> “the motive power which love and the desire for marriage represent in the choice of a calling and the preparation for it, in the competition for places, in business undertakings. In itself, love is far from being an economic passion; it dashes forward unfettered as the waters of a mountain torrent. But when restrained and guided, love, like the torrent, may yield enormous economic results.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Familie vom Standpunkte der Gesamtwirtschaft*, pp. 23-24.



How much of the toil in workshops and factories is undergone for the sake of making a home, and how much for the sake of the Family which follows. Enterprising journeys, daring speculations, as well as ceaseless industry, self-denial in consumption, economy, and the fruitful application of all the powers of mind and body, are due to this impulse, ennobled and purified in the Family, and so guided and stimulated to economic ends."

There are, of course, men and women who will satisfy their desires without undertaking the responsibilities of family life, and so avoid the need for strenuous work. There are others who find their chief delight in work for its own sake; and others, again, to whom the mere amassing of wealth is a sufficient stimulus to continued exertion. But all these are exceptions, and do not represent the normal average man. Nothing but the combined rights and responsibilities of family life will ever rouse the average man to his full degree of efficiency, and induce him to continue working after he has earned sufficient to meet his own personal needs. Moreover, it is, speaking generally, the only agency which will induce him to direct any considerable amount of his income from the gratification of his own personal needs to meet the needs of those who are unable to provide for their own. The Family, in short, is, from this point of view, the only known way of ensuring, with any approach to success, that one generation will exert itself in the interests and for the sake of another; and its effect upon the economic efficiency

of both generations is in this respect alone of paramount importance. It may be roughly measured by the difference between the efficiency of the average artisan and that of the solitary frequenter of casual wards and common lodging-houses; or in a higher social circle between the economic exertions and sacrifices of the ordinary respectable father of a Family and the unmarried society man without a profession. "Ces pères de famille sont capables de tout"; and amongst the everything must be included an immense amount of hard work and devotion.

Nor is it only the fathers who are stimulated to strenuous work by family responsibilities. We have already noted to what a large extent economic co-operation exists between all the adult members of wage-earning Families. To complete the economic significance of this co-operation it must also be noted that in most cases it enables the Family not only to provide for the young, but also to make very effective provision against times of sickness or out of work, and very considerable savings. Hence the temporary disability of any one member of a Family becomes a matter of comparatively small importance, and there is a fund to draw upon, if needed, to start any of the younger ones in life. In short, the Family acts, from this point of view, as a mutual benefit society with extended functions.

To a very large extent also this co-operation amongst the efficient members of a Family provides for those who are past work. We know too little of our people to enable us to say with certainty how far

this still remains true in face of the competition of Poor Law and the expectation of State pensions; but it is beyond doubt that the majority of the aged have their independence assured by membership of a family group. The same is true of innumerable cripples and invalids, and used to be so of many of the mentally afflicted who are now secluded in asylums.

It seems clear, then, that this grouping together of individuals into economic units comprising both strong and weak elements would be in itself, if it were nothing more, a most successful device for maximising the economic efficiency of a people. There are other conceivable methods of providing for the weaker members of a community, but none which call out the best qualities of the average man and woman to the same extent. It sometimes seems to us as if it would be cheaper and more effective to sort out all the old people on the one hand, and the children on the other, and have them managed by experts and paid for out of the taxes; and much of our modern philanthropy is engaged in perfecting methods in this direction. But what man would submit to be taxed to even half of what he is willing to spend on his family if it is left in his personal care? He might indeed have the fear of the tax-collector before his eyes, but as a motive that could never be an adequate substitute for the passions and affections which are the true incentive to enter upon and maintain family life. A passive resistance which took the form of economic inefficiency would be impossible to cope



with, and a bankrupt State would ultimately have to return to its members their responsibilities in their more concrete and interesting form.

But not only does the Family influence the amount of work which men will do, it is also largely influential in determining the *kind* of work which they will do. The general economic proposition that wages and net advantages will determine the supply of labour in any particular trade is, of course, true; but when we come to examine *how* these determining conditions are brought to bear in any particular instance we shall find that it is nearly always through the medium of the Family. The lad who is making his choice of a profession knows little as yet of comparative wages, and still less of net advantages; now and again he may have a strong inclination in some particular direction, but, generally speaking, his choice will be determined by his parents. Their influence will work, no doubt, in various ways. A boy may be attracted to a trade or profession in which he sees his father contented and efficient, or repelled from one in which he sees him discontented and failing. But when any calculation of advantages and disadvantages is to be made, it will be made by the parents. When his trade is unsatisfactory or shows signs of failing the father will warn his boys off (see p. 216); but in the majority of cases he will hand on his trade to one or more of his sons.

Local opportunity, of course, is another factor in determining the choice of work; but here again it is

generally the Family which is ultimately determining. It is the desire to retain the boy within the shelter of home life, when his parents cannot afford to pay for a substitute for that home life, which restricts his choice of occupation to a particular locality. On the other hand, his choice of occupations is restricted far more seriously where the home life fails. One of the chief difficulties which Poor Law Guardians have to contend with in selecting an occupation for the children passing out of their care is that they have no Family to live with during the early years of work ; hence there is a tendency for a large proportion of the boys to be sent to the army or to sea, while nearly all the girls are sent to domestic service. (It is a curious meeting of extremes which makes army and navy the favoured professions in the highest rank on the one hand, and the lowest on the other.)

Within wider limits, again, the social position of the Family will determine the callings of the children almost absolutely ; we can predict with much confidence of a Family in any particular walk in life whether its sons will be merely " gentlemen," or will enter a profession, or will work with head or with hands, for a wage or for a salary. And even in these days of changing views about women's education, it is still easy to foresee whether the daughters will be trained to useful work, or left to make a business out of pleasure, or even whether they will get the discipline and example which will make them efficient housewives and mothers. The influence of the Family

is less absolute than it was; it is more possible for sons to raise themselves from a lower status to a higher one, for daughters to rebel against tradition and become economically efficient; but even these exceptions will depend largely upon whether the influence of the Family has been stimulating or enervating.

How great this general influence of the Family is in determining the occupations of the young may be illustrated by a difference which has often been noted between French and English families—a difference which is far-reaching in its economic and social effects. It would seem that in French families the dependence, both moral and economic, of the children is prolonged far beyond what it is in England; and according to French writers this prolonged dependence is largely responsible for a marked lack of initiative and enterprise on the part of the young people, leading them away from commerce and industry towards the ranks of small officialdom. “Ask a hundred young Frenchmen, just out of school, to what career they are inclined, three-quarters of them will answer you that they are candidates for Government offices. . . . Independent callings, as a rule, only find their recruits amongst young men who have been unsuccessful in entering those careers.”<sup>1</sup> The reason for this preference is described by the same author in the following vivid terms: “How do we prepare our children? What do we teach them?

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *The Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon*, p. 3.



We teach them that the ideal, the supreme wisdom in life, is to avoid as much as possible all its difficulties and uncertainties. We tell them, 'My dear child, first of all rely upon us. You see how we save money in order to be able at the time of your marriage to give you as large a portion as possible. We are too fond of you not to do our utmost to ease for you the difficulties of existence. Next, rely on our relations and friends, who will exert their influence to find you a cosy berth. You must rely on the Government, too, which disposes of an innumerable quantity of comfortable posts, perfectly safe, and salary paid regularly at the end of each month; advancement automatic through the mechanism of retirement and deaths, so that you shall be able to know in advance what your emoluments are at such and such an age. At such another age, too, you will retire and be entitled to a pension—a good little pension. So, after doing very little work during your administrative career, you will be able to do nothing at all at a time of life when a man is still capable of activity. But, my dear child, as these situations imply but indifferent pay (for we cannot get everything), you must reckon on what your wife may bring you. A moneyed wife must, therefore, be found; but do not be uneasy about this, we'll find you one. Such is, my boy, the advice which our love dictates.' The young man who hears such language daily at home, in society, in the very street, not unnaturally gets accustomed to the idea of relying on others more than on self; he is consequently dis-

posed to shun all careers requiring continuous exertion and mental activity ; he would never dream of braving the uncertainties of agriculture, industry, or commerce, and simply prepares for a tranquil existence.”<sup>1</sup>

A more striking contrast could hardly be presented than this picture affords with the family atmosphere in which the normal British boy is brought up. He knows that he will get the education which is considered sufficient and customary in his father's social stratum, and perhaps enough capital to apprentice him to a trade, or to maintain him while learning a profession ; beyond that he expects to rely upon himself, and himself alone. If his parents make special efforts and sacrifices on his behalf, it is only to enable him to make his start at a somewhat higher level than they did themselves. He sees his friends and brothers launched off into independence, and is only too eager for the time to come when he also will be permitted to try his strength in the arena of real life. As for marriage portions, any father not belonging to the plutocracy would laugh at the idea of portioning his son, though he might give him a trifle towards furnishing ; and even the daughters amongst the great mass of the people do not look for a dowry. For good or for evil, I think again that the general feeling is on the whole against the man who makes too prudent a marriage, and that most Englishmen have a distaste for playing King Cophetua and the beggar maiden

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *The Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon*, p. 369.

with the parts reversed. It is said that this difference of feeling about the wife's money greatly affects the position of women in the home and in society in the two countries; but that is another question. The point now before us is, that marked national characteristics, such as influence the policy and destinies of the French and English peoples, have their origin in different views of family life and its responsibilities.

The question of the marriage portion brings us to another way in which the Family affects the whole economic organisation of a community, and that is by determining the transmission of property from one generation to another. This may take place on the occasion of the founding of new Families, and in some countries does so to a large extent. Amongst wealthy Families in all countries the marriage of the children is the occasion of the transference of property. In countries such as France, where the custom of the marriage portion is found amongst all classes, this transference within the Family is continually taking place. In 1883 it averaged (in France) 2000 francs for every marriage.<sup>1</sup> But in England for the main part it takes place, not when the new Families are founded, but when the old ones break up; that is, upon the death of the parents. Even where there is by law freedom of bequest, custom and public opinion combine with the natural influence of family affection to cause that the greater proportion of property passes along the lines of family relationship. In fact, the

<sup>1</sup> Hermann, p. 25.



property is so far still regarded as belonging rather to the Family than to the individual, that it is considered unnatural to leave any considerable part of it away from the immediate relations. And where the law does attempt to control the transmission, it is always to support the claims of members of the Family,—either of the one against the many, as in the German *Anerbenrecht*; or of the many against the one, as in the French law of division; or of the Family as against the outside world, as in the English law of intestacy. Even the succession duties, by which a portion of the property to be transmitted is appropriated by the State for its own use, favours its transmission to members of the Family by making the tax lighter in proportion as it is left to nearer relations.

It is difficult to estimate what would be the economic effect if this habit of transmitting the property through the Family should be abandoned. To judge from what happens now in the absence or repudiation of a natural heir, charitable and religious institutions would attract an increasingly large share of the wealth of the country; while the strange desire of man to keep his name and his property together after he himself ceases to be the link, would lead to the continual founding of new endowments. This would mean that every year would see more of the wealth of the country withdrawn from active enterprise and tied down to uses which every year would make more unsuited to its needs. On the other hand, it is likely that when no strong custom

would be violated, and no justified expectations injured, the State would claim an increasingly large share in the form of succession duty, and utilise it either to the relief of the living taxpayer or to the extension of communistic enterprise. Whichever of these results we may consider most probable, or whatever combination of them, it would seem clear that the Family, by maintaining the transmission of property into the hands of individuals, is a powerful influence in support of one form of economic organisation against others.

Finally, we come to the most important of the economic functions of the Family, perhaps the most important purely economic function which exists at all, since it controls directly and finally the prosperity and the ruin of nations. In the Family, and in the Family alone, are combined the forces which determine the quantity of population with the forces which determine its quality; and without this combination the decay of a people is inevitable. No State is strong enough, no State ever has been or ever will be strong enough to guard by its own action against this possible deterioration of its people. It cannot even enforce a limitation of the numbers of its people, and, indeed, the problem is not one of limitation of quantity at all, but the much more delicate one of quality. Where the quality is right no necessary limit is at present within view; where the quality is wrong, each one is one too many. "What do we mean when we speak of a surplus population? It can only be in an economic sense

that we venture to speak of any person or set of persons as surplus—from any other point of view it would be arrogance beyond measure; and from an economic point of view it must mean one of two things. In the first place, it might mean that the people in question were in excess of the actual amount of food, housing, etc., available for their support. But if this were all, there would be no reason for fixing upon any particular individuals or class as surplus more than any other; if there is one man too many in a boat, all are potentially that one, and the sacrifice of any one will get rid of the surplus. But the case is altered if there is one man only amongst them who cannot row, who is, therefore, a dead weight in the boat. His incapacity at once marks him out as the individual who is surplus, because he has no function to fulfil. So it is in society. When we speak of a surplus population we do not mean (merely) that numbers are so great as to exceed the means of subsistence; but we do mean that there is a particular section which is incapable of performing any useful function, and that therefore it is, from an economic point of view, surplus. There may, or may not, be other points of view from which its presence is desirable, and from which therefore it is not 'surplus.' The quantity of population then is excessive only when its quality is defective, and the problem thus becomes, not how to limit the population in number, but how to regulate it in respect of its quality. This can only be achieved when the will which determines the quantity of population is one with that which



determines its quality. That is to say, in the Family."

Of the function of the Family as an educative influence, fitting its members to become citizens of a larger community, we shall consider more fully in subsequent chapters. But its importance is no less as a means of selecting and perpetuating those types of human beings who are most fitted to live in communities, who have "co-operative" qualities. "Broadly speaking, the co-operative individual, as demanded by civilised life, can only be produced in the family, and therefore by a stock capable of producing a true family; and the test and engine of his production is the peculiar form of moral responsibility, supported by law and covering both material and moral incidents, which the family implies. Its unique importance as an agent of selection arises, of course, from the fact that to the family is entrusted the multiplication of the species, and its automatic action as a selective agency depends on the recognition of the principle that this union should only be entered on where the conditions of success in the struggle for a distinctively human existence, including as throughout a proper rearing of offspring, may be reasonably anticipated. The question of population is not a mere numerical question; of some qualities of population it is impossible to have too much, for they are self-limiting, of others every individual is in excess. The main difference between these kinds of population depends on the material and moral responsibility for the family being left with those who

have voluntarily formed it, and on every discouragement being thrown in the way of unions taking place where the true conditions of family life do not exist. I say, then, that the struggle to realise the conditions of true family life in its moral and material senses is the human 'struggle for existence' within the group, and that defeat in this struggle does largely entail, and ought so far as possible to entail, the extinction of the stock so failing."<sup>1</sup>

The belief that the prosperity of any community, whether Family or nation, can only be secured by limiting its numbers, is one which constantly recurs both in theory and practice; and it arises from regarding the available means of support as a fixed amount to be divided amongst all comers, so that the more applicants there are the less there will be for each. It ignores the possibility that each new-comer may contribute more than he consumes, in which case the more there are the greater will be the share for each. The difference of the two views and their actual effect upon family, social, and national life, can hardly be more strikingly illustrated than if we again compare the habits of typical French and English families.

No people, as we have already seen, are more solicitous about the welfare of their children than the French; and parents will practise any sacrifice to ensure that their children shall not fall below the social standard which is their ideal. But they regard this ideal as primarily dependent upon a given

<sup>1</sup> B. Bosanquet, *Aspects of the Social Problem*, pp. 299, 300.

amount of material wealth—land or money—and treat the matter as a division sum. Hence the number of their children tends to be determined by the number of “portions” which they are able to provide; with the result that the native-born population of France is actually declining.

In support of this statement, which of course is not of universal application, I will quote again the picturesque language of M. Demolins: “Amongst us a numerous family is such an overwhelming burden that, do what they may, there is but one resource for the parents, and that is to elude the difficulty. They cannot rely for the settling of their children either on the family community, which is dissolved, or on the children’s own initiative, which is smothered by their mode of education. The establishment of the children, therefore, remains in charge of the parents. A French father cannot get his children married except by giving each a portion; he is thus compelled to make as many fortunes as he has children, and this before the marriage of each, that is to say, within a period of eighteen to thirty years! You have just married. One year later you have a child. Is your vision that of a fair little head, a sweet smile? No: the vision is the surging ghost of a dowry, a portion which you will have to find. Eighteen months or two years later another child—that is another portion to constitute. Two portions in twenty-five years! You feel unequal to doing more, and in presence of a material impossibility you make up your mind to stop the expense. . . . Statistics fully establish the



influence of the dowry system in promoting voluntary sterility; the wealthier, the more provident classes (those who have to raise the money wherewith to portion their children), are those that have the smaller families. The poorer and less provident (the working classes) have large families; they are the classes whose children are left to grow and start in life as best they can. Thus, in the industrial *département* of the *Nord*, where the working population is numerous, there is a considerable excess in the number of births as compared to deaths—51,197 against 35,089 deaths. On the contrary, in rich agricultural districts, the death-rate is higher. In the *Eure*, 6842 births and 8128 deaths; in the *Oise*, 8851 births and 9068 deaths; in the *Orne*, 6851 births and 8534 deaths, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

The other point of view is illustrated, more or less unconsciously on their part, by the typical English Family. English parents, no less than French, desire that their children should not fall below the standard attained by themselves; perhaps even more than the French they are ambitious for them to rise above it. But they aim less at endowing them with material property than with the qualities which tend to the creation of property. The man who has given his sons a “good start”—that is, has sent them out well equipped mentally and physically to fight their own way—would be generally considered to have done well by them, better indeed than if he had merely saved a sum of money to be divided amongst them.

<sup>1</sup> Demolins, *The Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon*, p. 119.

And when the ideal of the Family (or of the State) is that each member shall be creative of his own fortune, then the necessity for limiting its numbers is diminished indefinitely, since each child that can be properly brought up is a source of added strength, not weakness.

One curious tendency of Family life in affecting both the quantity and quality of the people has been noted by German writers. I hardly know how far it could be substantiated, but there is sufficient probability about it to make it worth mentioning. I refer to the effect which the action of one generation has upon the next in influencing it to a contrary course of action. To take a simple instance, we are all familiar with the paradox that unselfish parents may make selfish children, and *vice versa*. Dr. Hermann considers that the rate of population is directly affected in this way: "When the number of children increases too fast, then the first-born must leave the home early; they see their portion diminished, and feel themselves deserted. . . . When later they themselves marry they are careful to limit the number of their children, so that we frequently find generations with few children following generations with many, and *vice versa*." <sup>2</sup>

Riehl notes a similar alternation in methods of education. Parents who have been sternly brought up desire a happier childhood for their own children; while those who have been treated indulgently realise the ill-effects in themselves and are anxious to avoid

<sup>1</sup> Hermann, *Die Familie*, p. 19.

a repetition of them. Hence the generations alternate between being "*geschmeichelte*" and "*geprügelte*."

I have said that our English Family is based upon the view that every child which can be properly brought up is a source of added strength, both to the Family itself and to the community. But what if the children cannot be properly brought up? If the mere task of bringing them properly equipped to the point from which they must start on their own account is beyond the powers of the parents, then has not the Family failed in this most important of all its functions, and must it not be superseded?

That the Family sometimes fails is almost a matter of course. Every institution must fail of its purpose when the individuals to whom it is entrusted to carry it on prove inadequate to the task which they have undertaken; but it does not follow that the institution itself is at fault. With the Family especially it seems true that where it fails it is not through any inheritant defect, but that its efficiency has become impaired through very definite causes affecting its responsible members. Sometimes these causes are relatively inevitable; as when one or both of the parents has died or become physically incapable. Even then the Family does not always break down; there are innumerable cases in which an elder brother or sister, an uncle or aunt, takes up the burden of the Family and bears it to a successful issue. Where this does not happen, a substitute has to be provided by the community; and in England this substitute



generally takes the form of schools or homes, where the children are maintained until they can be made independent.

But in many cases the efficiency of the Family has become impaired from causes which are much more subtle and complex than physical disability or death. And they are also far more threatening to the continuance of the Family as an institution. Death is normally no destroyer of the Family, which may shed as many members as a tree sheds leaves, and be none the weaker for the process. But there are hostile forces which attack the spirit which is the bond of family life, and when that decays the Family is really destroyed.

Many causes have been cited from time to time as tending to the disintegration of the Family. Perhaps the most formidable in appearance is the industrial change through which the Patriarchal Family has ceased to be an economic unit in a great part of the civilized world. With this change we have now dealt, and we have seen reason to think that great as it has been, it has not been destructive of the Family ; that economic forces remain which are sufficient to make the Family both strong in itself and valuable to the community of which it is a part. But in order to estimate the real strength of the modern Family we must now examine it still more carefully in its nature and in its constituent parts.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAMILY LIFE

IN speaking of the psychology of family life, I have in mind the development and play of those mental and moral qualities which members of a Family owe more especially to the fact that they *are* members of the Family, and which again lose a great part of their significance unless they are interpreted in their relation to family life. These qualities fall naturally into two groups. Perhaps the most striking are those characteristics which we speak of as family *traits*. Just as there are physical features, tendencies, habits, which reappear in generation after generation, or in one member after another of the same generation, and can only be explained by reference to the Family, so also there are qualities of the mind, the character, the disposition, which belong peculiarly to the Family, and can only be understood in reference to it. These form one of the principal groups of characteristics in question.

But before passing to consider these in detail, there is a second set of facts to be taken into consideration, which arise out of the constitution of a Family as such ; out of the fact, that is, that it is a community

made up of units dissimilar in age and sex, complementary in their nature and mutually responsible. As with all organic wholes, its parts are admirably fitted by nature to subserve each other's needs, and to supplement each other's efforts. The need of the weak for protection finds its correlative in the pride of the strong in protecting; the clinging appeal of the child for affection elicits a response which might otherwise remain dormant for ever. The authority which all adults like to exercise finds a beneficent outlet in guiding the action of immature wills; and children who weary when left to the caprices of their undisciplined natures, find strength and contentment in a rule which is autocratic without having the impersonal rigidity of external law. And the man, again, who would prefer solitude to the constant clashing at close quarters of his own will with that of another man, finds it completed instead of thwarted when its functions are supplemented by those of the woman.

It may be objected that in any community where strong and weak, old and young, male and female, are to be found there will be sufficient scope for the exercise of these various characteristics without the peculiar grouping into Families being involved. But the truth seems to be that in order to their perfection these qualities must be concentrated on a few definite objects, which again must not be arbitrarily given, but must form an integral part of life. The man who takes protection in the abstract for his function may form an admirable Don Quixote, but he achieves a



higher quality who concentrates upon his wife and children, and does a better work in the world ; while for the majority of men it is safe to say that in the absence of wife and children their protective instincts will either remain undeveloped or be turned upon themselves alone.

It is true, again, that the children with whom the world is overflowing may arouse a somewhat vague philanthropy in a considerable number of people, and we know to our cost what little good and what great harm may be wrought by this loose and aimless affection. It takes a particular child to elicit the tender wisdom and love which alone suffices to meet the needs of childhood, and in the great majority of people that peculiar tenderness is elicited (in its perfection) only by the child that is born of their own flesh and blood. There are many women, and still more men, in whom the children of other people raise at best a transitory interest and amusement, which easily changes into positive dislike if they are brought at too close quarters with them, or called upon to make any sacrifice of convenience for them. They may be induced to subscribe to an orphanage, but would repudiate with mingled disgust and terror the suggestion that they should take charge of a baby for the day, or make themselves responsible for personally bringing up a child to manhood or womanhood. But all the impossibility disappears and the sacrifice becomes a privilege when they find themselves the possessors of a child of their own. There is no pride in the world to equal that of parents over their first child,

and nothing short of this pride is strong enough to break down the barriers in which some natures are entrenched, and leave the way free for the appeal of infancy to make itself felt.

It is this same relation of parent to child which in the vast majority of cases ensures that authority will be exercised without degenerating into tyranny. That it is not always so is obvious ; and it is as easy as it is futile to point out instances where the Family has failed to achieve its full purpose. The Family affords scope for the qualities peculiar to the relations between strong and weak, old and young, male and female, and tends to deepen and accentuate them. Whether or not it exaggerates them will depend upon whether the spiritual forces in the Family have been well or ill balanced. The child who is never encouraged to develop his own initiative and assert his own individualities, the woman whose flexibility is subdued into feebleness, the man whose strength is perverted into tyranny, are all products of an ill-balanced family life. But where the spiritual forces are well-balanced within the Family, then, out of all the stress and strain arise qualities of mutual respect, forbearance, and self-control which the solitary individual has but little chance of acquiring.

But, it may be asked, if all we get from family life is this peculiar intensification of feeling and these varieties of qualities, and if the world would otherwise carry on as well without it, why cultivate and protect it so sedulously ? Why not rather sweep it away as a narrow-minded and exclusive organisation,

and let every citizen know that his first and last allegiance is to the State?

The answer is, that even if the world could carry on without the Family, it could not afford to lose the qualities which would go with it. It is a sombre world as it is, and no shade or tone of feeling which makes for depth and variety and richness can be spared from it. To reject the source of so much warmth and beauty because it sometimes fails, would be like banishing the sun from the sky because it is sometimes covered with clouds.

Nor is it true that the world would carry on as well without it. Apart from the fact that no one has ever yet devised an adequate substitute for a parent,<sup>1</sup> the further fact remains that the Family, with its mingled diversity and identity of interests, is the best—if not indeed the only—school for the life of the citizen. In a brilliant essay on the Institution of the Family, Mr. Chesterton writes of it: "The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world. He knows much more of the fierce varieties and uncompromising divergencies of men. The reason is obvious. In a large community we can choose our companions. In a small community our companions are chosen for us. Thus in all extensive and highly-civilised societies groups come into existence founded upon what is called sympathy, and shut out the real world more sharply than the gates of a monastery. There is nothing really narrow about the

<sup>1</sup> A human parent, that is: the artificial "foster-mother" seems to do well enough for chicks, but then they have no higher qualities to develop.



clan, the thing which is really narrow is the clique. The men of the clan live together because they all wear the same tartan and are all descended from the same sacred cow ; but in their souls, by the divine luck of things, there will always be more colours than in any tartan. But the men of the clique live together because they have the same kind of souls, and their narrowness is a narrowness of spiritual coherence and contentment, like that which exists in hell."

It is probably a mistake to suppose that cliques are ever based so deeply as to touch soul-depth at all ; it is rather because of their superficiality that they are so fatal. But there is no doubt about the fact that the man who has learned how to lead both an individual and a peaceful life within a large Family will find it surprisingly easy to get on with his fellow-citizens in the larger world, for he will have learned the difficult art of respecting the interests of others while maintaining his own.

If we pass now to the question of those characteristics which members of a Family possess because they are members of *that* Family, we are brought face to face with all the unsolved problems of heredity. It is not necessary for our purpose to discuss the various explanations of the mystery ; we need only to assume, what I think no one will deny, that members of the same Family do tend to reproduce within themselves the same qualities to a greater extent than members of different Families. It does not follow that those peculiarly family characteristics always tend to the strengthening of family life ; they may sometimes,

even often, lead to the dispersion rather than the concentration of its members in continued proximity; but even then they constitute a sort of negative unity which is always longing back, and cannot find permanent satisfaction in dispersion.

When we are accustomed to see or deal with people in great numbers, it is difficult not to lose sight of the significance of this factor in human nature. And indeed, just in proportion as we attempt to handle people in masses it tends to lose its significance and its helpfulness as a means of education. A striking instance of this oversight is to be found in an otherwise excellent study of boy life in London, when the author writes of the Family as follows: "The Family circle is a world in miniature, with its own habits, its own interests, and its own ties, largely independent of the great world that lies outside. If we take to pieces this small world, we shall find that it is built out of certain elements, some apparently significant, others more imposing, but all alike contributing its share in the general effect. It is these elements which admit of preservation and destruction. So far as regards the boy—and with him alone am I directly concerned—these factors of home life may be divided into six classes: the common dwelling, the common meals, the home training, his recreation (including domestic employment), his relations with the other members of the family, and, finally, the work for which he receives wages. Under one or other of these six classes all the activities of the family can be grouped. The Family sentiment is a product of these different

*factor making family*

factors, and varies as they vary, expanding or contracting with these contributing elements. Thus its present condition may be determined and its future predicted by an examination of these six more or less independent forces."

Even if the family sentiment were merely the product of such simple elements as these, capable of being taken to pieces and put together again like the bits of a dissecting puzzle, the writer need hardly have come to such a despondent conclusion as he does as to its power to maintain itself amidst the changing conditions of society. It is possible to describe the most beautiful music as merely the product of a particular combination of catgut and wood; but the music is more permanent than the mechanical means by which it is produced, and the family sentiment may outlive indefinitely the physical conditions in which it has originated. But important as the factors enumerated are, they are not all. If they were, it would be easy to make artificial Families out of any human material which came to hand, and all the great problems which centre round the question of heredity would be meaningless. For that question is just this—what is the nature of the mysterious link which binds together generation to generation, and individuals of the same generation in one indissoluble whole, and which no physiologist or psychologist has ever yet been able to explain? What is the nature of the sway which our ancestors exert over us, so that at times we seem utterly incapable of freeing ourselves from the passions and proclivities which, as it



is said, we have "inherited from them"? It is an inheritance, moreover, which we cannot take or leave as we will, and one which would seem never to wear out. The mingling with other Families may modify the family characteristics, or substitute others for them, indefinitely, for generations, and then suddenly the original type reasserts itself in all its vigour, and it is as if some long dead ancestor had come to life again. Implicitly or explicitly, potentially or actually, the family characteristics are there in every member of the Family, capable of reasserting themselves in every new generation, and forming the material from which each one of us has to mould his life and character. How is it possible that such a force as this, little as it may be realised or understood, should not be the main factor influencing family life? both the bond which holds its members together, whether they like it or not, and their chief source of spiritual strength. The family type is the theme, of which the individual members are the variations—variations sometimes so changed and complex that only the trained ear can grasp the fundamental theme, and sometimes so broadly simple that every passing listener is caught and smiles to hear the same old tune repeating itself. And however strange and subtle the variations, members of the Family themselves always recognise the theme running below; they are never wholly strange to one another; the chords respond, or echo, or clash, as the case may be.

It does not follow that these fundamental identities always lead to superficial harmony. A plain person

*family type is the theme.*

finds no attraction in a mirror ; and a person sensitive to his own defects of character may be inexpressibly jarred by seeing them reflected in another. I have known mothers whose irritation at the faults of their children was greatly enhanced by the fact that they recognised them as merely the faults of their own childhood recurring once again. And we fear no critic as we do the critic of our own Family, for has he not the key to all our weaknesses within himself? The stranger may be hostile and severe, but we can always console ourselves with the thought—which in nine cases out of ten will be perfectly true—that he does not really understand us. It is not being misunderstood which hurts most ; it is being understood at our weakest, just as what helps the most is being understood at our best. And the member of our Family understands us literally “down to the ground,” for it is the same ground upon which he himself stands.

Here, too, we may perhaps find an explanation of the strange bitterness which so often seems to attach to differences of opinion between members of the same Family. When an outsider differs from us we can accept it as something to be explained away by differences of experience, of surroundings, of education, above all of inherited temperament and disposition ; in a sense it is possible to think of each being so far right that his opinion is the natural outcome of the sort of person he is. But when our brother differs from us there is no such escape from discord ; this, we feel uneasily, is the same sort of person as

ourselves, his opinion proceeds from the same nature as our own, and we cannot see any reason for the conflict. It is as if one's own judgment were divided against itself.

We find the same bitterness attaching to "family quarrels," especially amongst people of strong and undisciplined feelings. A slight or an injury from some one within the circle may wound and rankle far more than from some one without, just because we think that there we ought to be safe. To the outside world we can wear the armour of reserve, but this avails us nothing where all that is covered by the armour is already known, and every weak point lies open. And the plea which may be accepted from the stranger, "I did not know that it would hurt you so," only deepens the wound when it comes from the brother who surely should have known. "Have you ever noticed," writes a friend who has great opportunities of observing life amongst the less educated working classes, "how implacable the people down here are with each other. For some slight cause offence is taken, and ever after they live apart. A Mrs. M. had a very favourite son—'far more handy and better to his mother than any of his sisters.' When the son became a young man he came in one day and found his mother paying his insurance, which he did not know had been taken out. He was vexed about it, and said in future he would pay it himself, and took the papers belonging to it. Then, with no further cause of ill-will, he took lodgings elsewhere, and cut his mother and sisters in the



street. They often meet him on Sundays when they are coming home from chapel. They are 'dressy' girls, and his mother says he would like to know them now; but his sisters disdain him and 'look through him.' We find many similar cases. Often one member of the family succeeds in life, and the other members are too proud to go where they are not wanted. They seem to have the old-fashioned primitive feelings of 'envy, malice, and all uncharitableness' very badly."

If we turn again for a moment to Mr. Chesterton's essay, we find him defending the Family on this very ground of its discords: "The modern writers who have suggested, in a more or less open manner, that the family is a bad institution, have generally confined themselves to suggesting, with much sharpness, bitterness, or pathos, that perhaps the family is not always very congenial. Of course the family is a good institution because it is uncongenial. It is wholesome precisely because it contains so many divergencies and varieties. It is, as the sentimentalists say, like a little kingdom, and, like most other little kingdoms, is generally in a state of something resembling anarchy. It is exactly because our brother George is not interested in our religious difficulties, but is interested in the Trocadero Restaurant, that the family has something of the bracing qualities of the commonwealth. It is precisely because our Uncle Henry does not approve of the theatrical ambitions of our sister Sarah that the family is like humanity. The men and women who, for good

*Little Kingdom*

reasons and bad, revolt against the family, are, for good reasons and bad, simply revolting against mankind."

Now I venture to think that the author has overlooked the real reason why these divergencies and varieties may be so great a source of irritation within the Family. It is not mainly because we are forced into close contact with people who differ from ourselves: Uncle Henry probably sees very little of our sister Sarah. It is not even that we disapprove of there being people who differ from ourselves: Uncle Henry probably has no foolish prejudices against actresses in general. It is something much more subtle, much more difficult to see clearly and overcome. It is the perplexing anomaly that these relations of ours, whom we know to be fundamentally akin to ourselves, should develop varieties of tastes and capacities which we have not developed; still more that they should have failed to develop tastes which we *have* developed, and which seems so natural and inevitable to us. We feel as if there must be something queer either about them or about us; as if they had disappointed our well-justified expectations, or were making claims upon our sympathies which must be unjustifiable, since we do not feel able to meet them. So that even these occasional discords are in themselves a proof of the unity which they violate. Their very intensity bears witness to the strength of the feeling against which they have to struggle, and which generally prevails in the long run.

And where, as so often happens, such discord either never arises or is effectually resolved, there we

*develop similar tastes*

have in the family life the fruits of the spirit in all their perfection. When children have learned in the nursery the lesson of mutual forbearance, and are neither exacting nor selfish, then free scope is allowed for the fundamental unity, the "family theme," to make itself felt in and through all its diverse variations. Within such a Family intercourse is on a different basis, is of another quality from what it is between members of different Families; the very language used takes on a shape of its own which may be hardly intelligible outside. Partly, no doubt, its mystery consists in allusions to experiences shared in common, and needing the merest hint to call them to mind, which are a sealed book to the outsider; but partly also it is the outcome of the fact that certain quaintnesses of expression and turns of thought appeal to, or represent, certain fundamental characteristics shared in by all members of the Family. To the outsider these expressions and turns of thought seem meaningless or silly; and it is for this reason that the family slang or patois, which I believe nearly every family possesses, is so sedulously concealed from the world at large.

But whether it finds expression in peculiarities of language or not, few will question the fact of the greater ease of intercourse between members of the same Family. Perhaps we realise it most strongly on the frequent occasions when what seems to us quite a simple straightforward expression of feeling or statement of fact is met by the blankness of incomprehension on the part of our acquaintance, and



all the embarrassments and difficulties of explanation have to be faced. Within the Family none of these are needed; thought leaps to meet thought, half a sentence is enough to indicate what we are feeling or thinking; at times indeed we feel ruefully the actual impossibility of concealing our thoughts or feelings. Exaggerations, again, can be indulged in freely, for they will unfailingly be discounted at their true value, or something less; expressions of momentary irritation will not be mistaken for expressions of deep-seated resentment; and a glance of the eye or movement of the hand is enough to guard against misinterpretation.

In addition to this quickness of comprehension, which implies more or less of an intellectual unity, there is an even stronger unity of feeling or emotion. It is generally quite unnecessary for one member of the Family to tell another what he thinks or feels in the way of approval or disapproval, to "give him a piece of his mind" is to give him what he has already got; even the child has no need of outward signs to tell him when he is "in disgrace," and the wise mother refrains from reproach when she is angered, knowing that to express her feeling in language is more likely to weaken than to strengthen her child's perception of it.

It is this unity of feeling again, which gives the dominant tone to a family life. Its members respond to the same appeals, their sympathies are aroused by the same causes. They are philanthropic, or intellectual, or religious, or artistic, or social; if any

member fails to share in the family interests, he is noted at once as an exception, and in the long run the family feeling is generally too much for him, and he develops philanthropy or religion in his old age with a sense of the inevitable upon him.

How real and strong a thing this unity of feeling is may be seen when some joy or sorrow falls upon some one member of a Family. We say it falls upon him, but it cannot fall upon him alone; what hurts one, hurts all, though sometimes in less degree, and any joy which comes to one touches all, it may be with a delight which is purer than that of the direct recipient. For him it is probably true that the new happiness brings with it new responsibilities and difficulties and complications, but to his Family it comes unshadowed by these, a joy in which they can participate with unalloyed content. And never perhaps is the unity of feeling more strongly felt than when through the fortunes of some one member the Family rises or falls in the estimation of the outside world. As it is with happiness, so too with honours. To the man who earns them they may bring a heavy burden, which the Family participating escapes entirely. But the Family knows well enough that it is by virtue of *its* strength, the nature which *it* has imparted to its members, that success has been achieved; and it can rightly share in the honour, while ignoring the cost to the individual which such a realisation of its nature involves.

Disgrace also it must share. In vain may one who has brought disgrace upon the name he bears

protest that it concerns himself alone ; he knows at heart that it is no mere convention which makes his Family suffer for his fault. That a member of the Family, sharing in its common nature, partaking in its impulses, instincts, sentiments, and education, can have done this thing—it is *that* which wounds deeper than all the scorn or pity from outside, for it reveals possibilities unrealised before. There is a sort of justice in the fact that the Family should fall in public estimation, since the family nature has shown itself capable of falling ; and the culprit must add to his responsibilities the fact that he has shaken that self-esteem of the Family which may have done much to make its members strong.

There may be cases where this diminution of self-esteem is to some extent a gain. The criticism that “they think too much of themselves” is not unfrequently justified by a Family with a keen sense of its virtues ; and more may be gained than lost by a shock which reveals to it its hidden weaknesses. But this trust in the nature which we share with our brothers is a very strong element in the bond which holds the members of the Family together, and may not be lightly sinned against. The deeds which we think impossible to us, we never dream of imputing to our brother ; where we feel no temptation ourselves, no suspicion arises with reference to him ; it is our own weaknesses which we expect him to share, and even here we generally expect him to be stronger to resist than we are ourselves. And out of this mutual trust in important matters, though it may



never find expression in words, springs a strength of attachment which is hardly realised in normal daily intercourse, but proves itself on the occasions when life touches its heights or depths.

But in every Family there are two members who have not started from this common ground of the Family nature. Husband and wife must win their way by conscious steps to the unity from which brother and sister start unconsciously; and just for this reason it is when won so much richer, so much more vividly and intensely realised. They meet as strangers, each attracted by the mystery of a nature as yet unknown, but promising in some rare and wonderful way to be not the repetition (but the completion of his own). And when the promise is fulfilled, then through the whole tale of married life may run the golden interest of exploring new depths of character, of the revelation of new treasures, of the discovery of new strength to uphold the other's weakness; while at every step of mutual discovery the bond becomes stronger, the two themes blend more completely, discords find their end in harmonies, and two become one beyond the possibility of dissolution. With others of our friends we seldom pass beyond the threshold; we know that there are treasures within, but we have not the key which will unlock the treasure-house; we cannot enter, they cannot let us in. We respect their achievements, sympathise with their fortunes, share their interests; but these things, vital as they are, yield us nothing like the unity of Family life unless

we can penetrate to the nature from which they spring.

There is, I think, no doubt, that when for any reason the Family is dissolved while its members are still young, when the children are brought up apart from each other and amongst strangers, these family characteristics tend to be diminished. The common nature may assert itself if they meet in later life; but it develops most freely in the daily intercourse of characters which are in the process of forming. The question thus arises whether it may not be an advantage for children to be removed from the narrow circle within which all their peculiarities of temperament and disposition are daily reinforced, and brought into contact with other natures where they may "rub their edges off" before the process becomes quite so painful as in after-life. The answer seems to be that for the community, at any rate, it cannot be an advantage, so long as individuality and variety of character remain of value. The strength of a nation does not lie, like that of an army, in the uniformity of its members, but in the variety and strength of the different characters which can be brought to work harmoniously within it; and it is in the Family that this variety and strength of character is nourished.

variety & strength of  
character nourished

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CONSTITUENT PARTS OF THE FAMILY

#### I. THE MAN IN THE FAMILY

THE first question which suggests itself in connection with the actual function of the man at the present day and in the modern Family, is that of his authority. Bearing in mind our survey of the past, we may ask: How does the father of a modern Family stand as compared with his ancestors in respect of the authority which he exercises? He is still recognised as the Head of the Family, but when we ask whether this position carries with it the power which it used to carry, and upon what his power, such as it is, is based, we are forced to recognise great changes. When, for instance, we take that authority in its most exaggerated form but at its lowest level amongst the most primitive peoples of all, we find it based mainly upon the man's superior physical strength, upon brute force, and tending to last just so long as his strength enables him to maintain it. Upon this basis his authority over his wife is absolute and permanent; over his children it is absolute, but only until the



time comes when they are stronger than he. But in the modern Family physical strength counts for comparatively little. Except amongst the roughest and most uncivilised classes, public opinion is too strongly against the man who cannot maintain his authority without recourse to violence for physical strength to be a factor of any importance in supporting the rule of man. Moreover, public opinion has found clear and authoritative expression in the law; the State has not only ceased to recognise the father's right to inflict corporal injuries upon members of his Family, it definitely intervenes to protect them against cruelty on his part. Perhaps we may still find traces of the old view in the leniency with which the offence of wife-beating is punished; but the fact remains that it is punished, and not recognised as the legitimate means of enforcing authority.

Again, in a far more advanced state of society, we found in the priestly function of the Head of the Patriarchal Family the basis of an authority the most complete and permanent that has ever been known. Does anything remain of this? Religious ceremonial has long ceased to be a private family affair; it has been taken over and organised by the churches, and though some of its priests adopt the name of father, fathers are no longer allowed to call themselves priests. And yet the priestly function lingers to some extent. It is still the Head of the Family who "reads prayers"; and in the absence of any strong reason to the

contrary, it is the father who determines what the religion of the Family will be. Riehl insists upon this. "If I am asked," he writes, "'why are you a Protestant?' I can only answer, and there seems to me nothing superficial in the answer, because my father was a Protestant. I am a Protestant by conviction, but I should never have attained to this conviction unless I had grown up amongst Protestant views and ideas, unless my family had been Protestant; thus my religious belief, of all things apparently most peculiarly my own, has been essentially inoculated into me through the authority of the Family. Hence the ordinary man regards the falling away from the faith of one's fathers as particularly disgraceful, because it involves the greatest renouncing of the Family."<sup>1</sup> In Families, then, where religion is a living force, it can hardly fail to be that the authority of the father is strengthened and raised to a higher level by the fact that he is the medium through which members of his Family have come to hold the faith that is in them. And so far as this is the basis of his authority, it will tend to be permanent; but religion itself, in its insistence upon personal freedom and responsibility, will limit it and make it but the faint reflection of the paternal power from which it is descended.

In less developed communities, again, we found the authority of the father based upon his superior wisdom and experience, in the absence of any accum-

<sup>1</sup> Riehl, *Die Familie*.

ulated and accessible store of knowledge. He was the teacher and adviser of the young, who looked to him for guidance in their inexperience. But this function also has to a large extent been taken from him; and education has been organised in books and schools in such a way as to make the young apparently independent of their parents in the acquisition of knowledge. But here the change has been largely apparent; the wisdom of life, the art of living, as distinct from book learning and knowledge about things, still rests with those who have lived, and can rarely be taught in books or schools. The fathers who recognise this prerogative of theirs and all that is involved in it, find in it one of the surest bases of authority; it is to them, and not to books, that their sons will turn when they are first confronted with problems in life which call for wisdom and experience in their solution.

Still another function has been taken from the Head of the Family in that he is seldom now the head also of an industrial community. The authority delegated to him in that capacity in agricultural communities would be indistinguishable from his authority as a father; the respect paid to his commands as a master from that paid to his commands as a father. But the modern Family has largely, though not entirely, ceased to be an industrial community, and so far another basis of paternal authority has disappeared.

Closely allied to this last is the authority which the Head of the Family derives from his power over



the family estate. How this power has varied throughout the history of the Family, and how its variations have affected the relations between different members of the Family, we have already seen. It still lingers in an attenuated form in the feudal Families which remain; and the father's authority in these Families may vary in proportion as he has freedom of control over the property. But it is in the more strictly modern Family, where property is apt to be regarded as appertaining entirely to the individual, that this power suddenly springs into importance again, and becomes a formidable weapon in the hands of the father who can find no better basis for his authority. The power of the purse, the power to cut off allowances or to disinherit, is strong; but it is strong only in proportion as those who are subjected to it are weak; it is a tyranny which can be cast off as soon as its victims find the sources of independence within themselves. The only true and firm basis of authority must be one which finds a response in the natures of those over whom the authority is exercised; and the power of the purse, like that of brute force, elicits no response, only subjection.

It is only amongst the wealthy minority that this spurious power has any force to speak of. The majority of the English race aims, as we have said, less at endowing their children with the material for subsistence than with the capacity of obtaining that subsistence for themselves; and it

might be argued that in thus promoting the early independence of their children, fathers were relinquishing their strongest hold upon them. However that may be, an early independence is almost universal for the boys of a middle or working-class Family, and increasingly so for the girls, although for the latter domestic subjection, based on the power of the purse, remains not uncommon.

Taking the matter in this way, and seeking to find a basis for parental authority in the relics of past institutions, it would seem as if Time had been purely destructive; and as if what we had left to us was little more than a tradition, ready to crumble away altogether at the shock of any further change. But if we take it differently and seek rather for the positive element in the present, we shall find that the action of Time has been one of change, it is true, but of change in the sense of development rather than of destruction. ✓

To begin with, we must, in studying our modern Family, distinguish between two kinds of submission. There is the submission which implies a tyranny, based upon the weakness and impotence of its victims; and there is the submission which may be expressed as loyalty, and which implies a rule eliciting a response from the highest qualities of those who are subject to it. Now the development of the modern Family has been almost entirely in the direction of eliminating those elements which lead to the first kind of submission, and of strengthening those which lead to loyalty. /

Take, for instance, the change implied in the present devotion of the parents to the interests and welfare of the children, as compared with the times when children were regarded as entirely subservient to the aims of the parents or the cult of the ancestors. It is true, of course, that there are still Families where the interests of the children are almost entirely neglected, but they are now abnormal, and instance a degradation from the type. The trend of modern development is to throw the weight of interest on to the rising generation. It is obvious, no doubt, that this leaves more scope for the play of selfish and egotistical instincts on the part of the children, but it also leaves scope for a far higher order of response than that of mere submission. Gratitude forms a part of this response; but it is something different from and more than gratitude. There is an unconscious spontaneity about it which wholly precludes the sense of burdensomeness which may attach to mere gratitude; and it is unlimited by any question of proportion between the benefits mutually conferred and received. Moreover, loyalty is a principle which is active in children long before the time when they begin to realise what they have owed to their parents' care and effort. The normal child in the normal Family accepts everything which comes to him in the ordinary course of the home life with a sublime unconsciousness of any sacrifice being involved. It is a part of his loyalty to his parents that he leaves it all to them, with full confidence



that they will be equal to every occasion. In proportion as he himself begins to share in the family responsibilities, he will begin also to realise what he has owed to them; but an adequate knowledge can only come when he has felt the full burden of life, and when, if his sense of loyalty has been unimpaired, he is already a willing minister to the claims of the Family. And the father, as the originator, the organiser, the support, the *author* of the Family, will seldom fail of the loyalty of its members unless he himself by his unwisdom or tyranny has destroyed the respect in which it is rooted.

In so far as the authority of the parent is based upon a greater maturity of reasonable will, it must always exist until such time as the will of the child is itself rationalised and matured. This lies in the nature of things, and is no more than to say that where two forces combine, the strongest will have most influence in determining the result. There is no tyranny involved in this when the purpose and aim of the parents includes the welfare of the Family, for then they are but guiding the will of the child to attain an end which it is as yet incapable of conceiving and attaining for itself. "We are born free as we are born rational," writes John Locke, "not that we have actually the use of either; age that brings one, brings with it the other too. And thus we see how natural freedom and subjection to parents may consist together, and are both founded on the same principle. A child

is free by his father's title, by his father's understanding, which is to govern him till he hath it of his own. The freedom of a man at years of discretion, and the subjection of a child to his parents, while yet short of it, are so consistent and so distinguishable that the most blinded contenders for monarchy 'by right of fatherhood' cannot miss of it; the most obstinate cannot but allow of it."<sup>1</sup>

When we consider the relation between man and wife in the modern Family it seems to me more especially true that this idea of loyalty—both to each other and to a common purpose—is the only one which adequately represents it. The day is past when the patient Griselda, ready with unreasoning submission for every tyrannical command of her despotic husband, was extolled as fulfilling the highest ideal of wifely duty. *Disobedience* might be considered as reprehensible as ever, but a large share of the blame would be reserved for the husband who should make conformity to his will a frequent problem. In place of despotism on the one side and submission on the other, we find the willing loyalty which recognises that *if* two wills conflict in their pursuit of a common purpose, then the will which called the Family into being, and which is primarily responsible for its welfare, must in the interests of the Family be supreme. But self-assertion, self-realisation, cease to be hostile forces when each of the selves concerned is seeking the fulfilment of its purposes, its own fullest realisation, in a common

<sup>1</sup> Locke, *Treatise of Government*, p. 221.

end, whether that end be the family life or some other and perhaps wider.

Another reason for the continued authority of the man within the Family is the fact that he continues to represent it, as recognised Head, to the outside world. He acts for the Family, stands for the Family, gives his name to the Family, and is the legal and authorised representative of the Family. And he is held responsible to the community of which he is a member for the proper maintenance, conduct, and upbringing of the Family which he has called into existence. There is only one curious exception to this representative character of the man; it is that in Society he has no official value. It is true, no doubt, that his rank determines the particular "circle" within which the Family will "move"; but the movements themselves, in order to be valid, must be performed by the woman. In society intercourse (a somewhat different matter from social intercourse) the woman only is accepted as representative and official; it is she who must organise recognised hospitality, must be the dispenser of invitations, must initiate or reject acquaintanceships, and—quaintest function of all—must "pay the calls." The man, of course, may and does participate in all these functions, but he cannot discharge them; all that he does in this connection is unofficial and does not count.

Apart from this one convention, however, his responsibility to the world is complete, from the moment when she whom he has chosen for his partner is "given" to him in marriage. He can



only repudiate it by taking formal and recognised steps to do so, and it lasts as long as the Family itself remains together as one household. This being so, it is clearly necessary and just that he should have sufficient authority within the Family to control it in those matters for which he is held responsible.

One of the most important functions which a man exercises in a community is that of electing its rulers ; and the question has been raised whether he exercises his electoral privileges as representative of his Family or merely as an individual taxpayer. That able and strenuous opponent of the enfranchisement of women, W. H. Riehl, maintains that if the right to the franchise is based merely upon the taxation of individuals, then there is no justification for the exclusion of women. But he also maintains the true theory of political representation to be that the State represents not individuals but Families ; and that the woman, as part of the Family, is adequately represented by the vote of the Head of the Family. "The man is not only the legal guardian of the household ; it is through him alone that all which the household does for education and morality is extended to wider circles, is made public property. Where the marriage is a true one, spiritually equal and morally complete, there are always two persons contributing to the highest thoughts and opinions of the man—himself and his wife. In this lofty and pure sense all true wives are represented in Parliament when the husband sits there." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Riehl, *Die Familie*, p. 103.

But Riehl is clear-sighted enough to see that this theory involves the limitation of the franchise to Heads of Families, and he is prepared accordingly to grant it only to husbands or widowers. The argument that a woman is sufficiently represented by her husband or father is of course frequently used in England, especially by those who also maintain that to grant her the franchise would cause instant strife between her and her male representatives; but no one, I think, has suggested that the Family as such should be the unit for voting purposes. It is true that in "household suffrage" we have something like the idea; but household suffrage admits many single men who represent at most themselves and their domestic servants, while the lodger franchise practically abandons the idea of a household as the basis of political representation.

In virtue of what prerogative does the man hold this supreme place as representative of his Family in the community? To ascribe it to his superior physical strength will hardly satisfy our modern conceptions, any more than to ascribe his authority within the Family to the same cause; although the argument that woman is disqualified by her incapacity to serve in the army, which is frequently advanced in Germany, approaches perilously near to this. A far more acceptable theory to one half of the human race would be that the man alone possesses a fully-developed intellect, and that by virtue of this he is natural ruler and guide. This is, I think, the explanation which would be most generally offered at the present day: almost univer-

sally in Germany, less so perhaps in France, to a large extent in England, least of all in America. But whether or not it is the case that a woman's intellect is never of the highest order, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain with any show of reason that it may not, with proper education, be as fully developed as that of the average man, and the argument from intellect becomes daily less relevant.

Nevertheless, it seems neither likely nor desirable that the function of representing the Family should ever be transferred to the woman during the lifetime of the man. In the numerous cases of widows or single women the matter is different; but where the Family is based, as it normally is, upon a partnership, law, convention, and mutual assent have fixed upon the man as most suitable for the purpose, not only by natural disposition, but also and mainly by the natural and necessary division of labour between the two chief members of the partnership. This division of labour, under which a large part of the woman's activities are directed towards domestic cares, would in itself suffice to debar her from acquiring facility in matters of business intercourse. But the division is essential, and the lines which it follows are drawn not so much by the woman's inability to work for her Family in the outside world—she constantly does so when the death or illness of her husband throws the double burden upon her; but from the obvious fact that the man is incapable of the more domestic duties incident upon the rearing of children. And it is largely this incapacity which



gives him the power both of concentration and of width of view. While the woman's mental energies are being dissipated over the thousand little details which are necessary to the successful management of a family, the man's are free to pursue some line of thought, to concentrate on some course of action, to organise some business, to frame and follow out some policy.

Now it seems obvious that if man's predominance in the outside world is the natural consequence of a recognised division of labour, it should not extend to matters which have been assigned by that division to the other partner; and as a matter of fact the families in which it does so are probably exceptional. His authority remains, no doubt, as determining the basis of the family life, and the main outlines of its movements, the scale upon which the household is to be organised, the kind of education the children are to receive, the place in which the Family is to reside, and so on; but it should not extend to details. His position is that of supreme authority, a court of appeal to be called in as a last resource, and as such the mere fact of his existence is invaluable to the housewife by strengthening her hands in the management of children and servants. But it is a power which is soon lost if exercised on any but the most important occasions; and the wise man recognises that the real acting authority in daily life is that of the woman. If we accept the mysterious term "Influence," with which women are invariably consoled for the absence of political rights, we might

apply it to describe the mode in which the man's authority is normally exercised in domestic life. In reference to the outside world, man has power and woman "influence"; within the home, woman has the active power, and man the "influence."

This more or less roughly describes the division of work in all classes where the man earns and the woman spends, but it is more especially true amongst the wage-earners. "Money matters are left entirely to the wife; it is she who decides whether an increased rent can be paid or an article of furniture bought, whether a boy shall be apprenticed or must take what work he can find, and what insurance clubs, etc., shall be joined. The custom of leaving the management of money to the wife is so deeply rooted that children always speak of the family income as belonging entirely to her, and will constantly tell you: 'Mother has to pay so and so for rent'; 'Mother is going to try and afford father this or that'; 'Mother isn't going to let father work for Mr. — any more, she says the wages isn't worth the hours.'<sup>1</sup> . . . Fathers are regarded by the children as plainly inferior to mothers in authority, in knowledge of right and wrong, and, above all, of 'manners.' . . . Talk of the subjection of women!—I doubt if the bare idea of fathers being equal to mothers in rank and authority ever enters the mind of any cottage child under sixteen. From their conversation all my little friends might be fatherless, except for an occasional dramatic recital of how dad 'went and did' something

<sup>1</sup> *The Queen's Poor: Husband and Wife among the Poor*, pp. 15, 16.

She  
takes  
the role of  
the class  
mothers as  
wage  
managers

that mother said he 'hadn't ought to,' and the disastrous results of this untimely rebellion. Father is generally regarded in the light of mother's eldest child, and disobedience in *him* is far more heinous a crime than in *them*, because 'he'd ought to know better than not to do what mother says.' Fathers are, as a rule, perfectly satisfied with this position, not minding in the least when the youngest born publicly raises a note of warning: 'Mother said as you *wasn't* to do that, dad.'"<sup>1</sup>

There is one point upon which the position of the man in the Family is apt to be gravely misrepresented, and that is in his attitude towards, and treatment of, the children. Broadly stated, the very common assumption is that he dislikes children, regards them as an inevitable encumbrance, and is consistently unsympathetic and often cruel in his dealings with them. It is of course against the working class that this libel, for libel it is, is most frequently directed. This pessimistic, one might almost call it brutal view, finds expression in one of Sydney Smith's essays: "A ploughman marries a ploughwoman because she is plump; generally uses her ill; thinks his children an encumbrance; very often flogs them; and, for sentiment, has nothing more nearly approaching to it than the ideas of broiled bacon and mashed potatoes. This is the state of the lower orders of mankind—deplorable but true—and yet rendered much worse by the Poor Laws."

<sup>1</sup> *The Queen's Poor: Husband and Wife among the Poor*, pp. 15, 16.



This is a view which finds many supporters at the present day, and those who hold it pride themselves on being freed from sentimental prejudice, and looking at things "as they really are." It is due partly, no doubt, to the vulgar assumption that "the poor" belong indeed to a "lower order," in that they do not share in the natural affections and virtues which are reserved for the moneyed classes, and partly again to a lack of familiarity with the people in their normal and healthy relations. It is perhaps the exception for those who hold this view to come into relation with the working classes except in connection with the demoralising influences of charity and the Poor Law, and they draw their inferences from the families which these agencies have helped to destroy. But such a view of father and child is contrary to the whole history of the human race, which has found no higher or more adequate conception in which to express its sense of divine loving-kindness than that of fatherhood. And who will say that the Psalmist had only the cultured few in mind when he declared in words which go home to every heart: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"?

To those who have eyes to see, this tenderness of the father is to be found in every class of society which still maintains its independence, and certainly not less among the poor than among the rich. "The ideal of fatherhood," writes Miss Loane, "is less developed among the poor than the ideal of motherhood. The tenderness lasts far too short a period, and there is rarely any attempt at moral training. Neverthe-

less, men of the working class are as much libelled as fathers as working-class women are as cooks, nurses, and managers. In both cases the millions bear the blame that is only due to a few tens of thousands. Paternal affection may not be very strong after a boy has reached his tenth and a girl her twelfth year, but it is lavished on them at an age when the circumstances of poor people's daily lives make it almost indispensable for their children's health and happiness. In countless homes the busy, many-childed mother breathes freely for the first time in the day when her husband returns from work. . . . The honours of fatherhood are divided. The professional man generally begins to show most attention to his children about the time when the working man's devotion slackens. The working man adores children at an age when the former would not dare to give his candid opinion of them even to a confirmed bachelor."

This generalisation cannot, of course, be applied at all rigidly. Towards his own babies, at least, the indifference of the professional man is sometimes only assumed as a cloak to cover the extremity of sentiment with which he regards them. But there is, I think, little doubt that the distinction exists, and that the working man is apt to be more completely unabashed in his tenderness for his children. When he cares for them at all, there are no reservations about it. Clean or dirty, laughing or crying, asleep or awake, quiet or naughty, he adores them in all their moods, and applauds their misdemeanours as much as their virtues. From the point of view of

education this has its drawbacks, and a love with more self-restraint would doubtless be both better for the children and more enduring; but it enables the man to tolerate annoyances which would be intolerable to one of finer sensibilities.

It is partly, no doubt, the possession of more highly strung nerves which makes the educated man less tolerant of babydom. But partly, also, it is the awkwardness and restraint which he feels in the presence of the strange creature which forms a barrier between him and the baby. He has no means of communication with it; for all practical purposes of intercourse it is deaf and dumb; he does not know how it will respond to his advances, nor how to deal with its difficulties. In the Family of the working man he is forced into close contact with the newcomer from its first arrival, and must take his share in ministering to its needs; and thus he learns almost as soon as its mother to be on terms of intimacy. But in a Family where a nurse takes charge from the first, the father's acquaintance is apt to be limited to a more or less formal introduction, and it may be months, or even years, before he feels really at home with the stranger whom he has invited to become a permanent member of his household. But though it may be longer in his case before the channels of communication can be opened up and the true relationship of fatherhood established, this relationship has about it the possibilities of a permanent friendship of the highest type, just because it is based not only upon instinctive affection.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE CONSTITUENT PARTS OF THE FAMILY—*continued*

#### II. THE WOMAN IN THE FAMILY

WITH respect to the proper position and function of the woman in the Family there is general agreement up to a certain point. If the husband is the head of the Family, the wife is the centre. It is she who is primarily responsible for the care of the children; to the utmost extent of which the family means will allow, it is her duty to see that they are well cared for, both physically and morally; and it is generally agreed that this duty can only be properly fulfilled by personal attention. The wealthy mother who hands over her children to the care of nurses and governesses, however highly she may pay these, without constant and adequate supervision, fails just as reprehensibly of her duty as the poorer mother whose carelessness or ignorance leaves them wholly neglected. It is a duty which cannot be delegated.

*x wife is the centre*

*x Careless ignorance*

Further, she is responsible for so ordering the household that every member of it may have a home life which is physically healthy and morally wholesome. It is more especially her business to watch

*x*

over the interests of the weaker members, whether it is the backward child in the nursery, or the kitchen-maid in the scullery, and to see that all have a fair chance of developing whatsoever capacities lie in them.

With regard to finance, again, she has most important functions. She may have little to do in determining the amount of the family income, but even more important than its amount is its right distribution, and this should lie mainly within her powers. It is for her to judge what things are necessities and must come first, and what things are luxuries and may be postponed; and she alone can have such an intimate knowledge of the needs of each member of the household as to be able to judge which are most pressing. And it should be noted that in thus determining the distribution of the family income she is also performing a national function, for by laying down the lines of consumption she is also laying down the lines of production and directing industrial and commercial enterprise.

Perhaps it is here also that her influence, when rightly used, most makes for peace and order in the household. When all know that their needs are duly appreciated and cared for, there will be little selfish clamouring of individuals; and most people will cheerfully go without full satisfaction of their wants when they know that their claims have been subordinated only to claims which are greater.

And a well-ordered household in this sense is a woman's first duty towards the predominant partner,

her husband. It is this which she tacitly undertakes when she enters into partnership with him for the important business of carrying on family life; and in so far as his own personal comfort is involved in this, he has a right to expect it. But that does not carry the right to expect that his personal comfort shall be the first consideration, and that the woman's duty is primarily to minister to him. The partnership was formed for mutual help and support in a serious undertaking, and when either partner tries to make it subserve his private ends alone he is virtually guilty of breach of contract.

It is at this point, the question of how far the woman in the Family is to be subservient to man's personal needs, that controversy has generally arisen; and it has its root in the assumption, wholly erroneous as I believe, that the interests of men and women are in some way inevitably opposed. Whenever the question rises of extending or improving women's education, or of giving them wider opportunities of work in the outside world, the supporters of the movement find themselves confronted by what we may call the pseudo-domestic school, who cry out that the peace and safety of home life is being endangered. Against the argument that women would be healthier and happier, both in mind and body, if their minds were set free to healthy exercise instead of being confined in brooding ignorance, is set the argument that man would suffer, that woman's true function is to subordinate herself to him, to spend her hours in tending him, or—since



this might become tiresome—in waiting to tend him when he should be inclined for it, to “create an atmosphere” for his activities, and to be a passive receptacle for such of his opinions as he might care to impart. The most consistent exponents of this view have always been the Germans :—

Dienen lerne bei Zeiten das Weib nach ihrer Bestimmung  
 Denn durch Dienen allein gelangt sie endlich zum Herrschen  
 Zu der verdienten Gewalt, die doch ihr im Hause gehöret.  
 Dienet die Schwester dem Bruder doch früh, sie dienet den Eltern,  
 Und ihr Leben ist immer ein ewiges Gehen und Kommen,  
 Oder ein Heben und Tragen, Bereiten und Schaffen für Andre.  
 Wohl ihr, wenn sie darum sich gewöhnt, dass kein Weg ihr zu  
     sauer  
 Wird und die Stunden der Nacht ihr sind wie die Stunden des  
     Tages,  
 Dass ihr niemals die Arbeit zu klein und die Nadel zu fein dünkt,  
 Dass sie sich ganz vergisst und leben mag nur in anderen !<sup>1</sup>

This ideal, it was thought, could no longer be maintained if once women should assert the right of independent intellect ; and with it the autocratic life of the man would be shattered. There would cease to be only one will in the home, and where there are two wills there is the possibility of conflict. Few saw what many now realise, that the old ideal with all its beauty and strength could only be cast down by one still higher and more beautiful ; that the devotion of women could be greater, not less, when they had richer minds and wiser hearts to give ; that the noblest harmonies of life arise when two disciplined and independent wills combine ; and that the truest comradeship is found when man and woman meet on

<sup>1</sup> *Hermann und Dorothea.*

the common ground of mutual intellectual respect. Innumerable happy homes bear witness to-day to the truth of this higher ideal, and so far the battle has in principle been won for ever.

But it must be admitted that in practice there are still many who hold that man can only reach his highest by making a stepping-stone of woman. In Germany, men, though not regardless of women's welfare, are still eager to prove to them that their true welfare lies within the four walls of the home, and that real greatness consists in the daily routine of household duties. And yet they weary of the poor *Hausfrau* who puts her trust in their teaching and faithfully confines her life within the narrow limits laid down by them. One of the most plausible and convincing of these teachers is Riehl, the sociological historian, who in his book, *Die Familie*, strenuously advocates the purely domestic theory of woman; and it is not a little amusing to find him remarking in a surprised sort of way how on the occasion of some international conference the English and Americans brought their wives with them: "A German of culture would rejoice on such an occasion to be free of his family, and would certainly leave his wife at home." Of course he would; no one wants his holidays to be burdened and clouded with an epitome of household drudgery; but it does not seem to occur to the writer that a wife capable of intelligent comradeship might even add to the pleasures of a holiday.

But the same curious shortsightedness seems to

have affected men whenever they have turned their attention to considering woman. They complain, and with justice, of her narrow-mindedness, her lack of intelligent interests, her uncertain temper, her frivolity. These all make her a most trying partner to live with. But the strange thing is that they have so seldom recognised that the remedy is not in complaint, but in admitting her to wider interests and a more invigorating mental life. "It is false," writes Plutarch, "to say that idle people are cheerful; if so, women would be more cheerful than men, as they mostly stay at home; but as it is 'though the north wind may not touch the tender maid,' yet vexation and distraction and ill-feeling, owing to jealousy and superstition and innumerable empty fancies, find their way into the boudoir." To my mind there is something very *naïve* in the way in which men have constantly pointed out the ill effects upon women of idleness and untrained faculties; they have seldom realised that the discomfort they experience from these ill effects is, after all, only the natural consequence of their own theories about women's education. One would think there had been time enough for them to have learned the lesson between the days of Plutarch and the eighteenth century; but in 1710 we find a writer in the *Guardian* repeating Plutarch's complaint almost verbally: "I could name you twenty families where all the girls hear of in their life is that it is time to rise and come to dinner, as if they were so insignificant as to be wholly provided for when they are fed and



clothed. It is with great indignation that I see such crowds of the female world lost to human society, and condemned to a laziness which makes life pass away with less relish than in the hardest labour. Palestris in her drawing-room is supported by spirits to keep off the return of spleen and melancholy before she can get over half of the day for want of something to do, while the wench in the kitchen sings and scowrs from morning to night." He proposes as a remedy that "those who are in the quality of gentlewomen should propose to themselves some suitable method of passing away their time. This would furnish them with reflections and sentiments proper for the companions of reasonable men."

Here we have some slight recognition of the fact that the interests of men and women are not really hostile in this respect, and that a woman is likely to be a more amiable as well as a more intelligent companion if she is not forced to confine her activities within the four walls of home and the narrow, if absorbing, duties of domestic life.

But though this recognition is an important step forward, the real issue lies deeper still. Granting that a wider range of life and thought makes woman a pleasanter companion for men, does it do this at the cost of her effectiveness as mother and housewife? Is she made less fit for her duties towards the Family by taking a greater share in the intellectual and practical life of the world? This is the ground upon which the question is now being argued by those who have advanced beyond the sphere of man's merely

personal welfare; and the position of the woman in the modern Family cannot be fairly stated without considering the point. The further question of whether woman's influence in the outside world is for good or for evil does not concern us here.

It is hard to believe that the practical woman of trained intelligence should not be a more efficient mother and housekeeper than the peevish, hysterical creature so often described by men. But considerations of great weight have been brought forward on the other side, and although some of them are, by their nature, incapable either of verification or refutation, they must be presented. The following quotation from Blüntscli represents what we may call the purely dogmatic statement of the pseudo-domestic theory. He is arguing against allowing women any participation in public affairs:—"Her proper sphere is the life of the family, for which she would be unfitted by mixing largely in public duties and political struggles. Womanly virtues would suffer,—woman's love as mother and wife, her housewifely skill, her fine sensibility and sweetness of character,—and there would be no gain in political capacity to make good the loss."<sup>1</sup>

This is, of course, purely dogmatic assertion; there is no experience forthcoming to show *a posteriori* that the exercise of the franchise or even active service in a public capacity would affect women's power of loving, and no *a priori* reason to be shown why it should; while the housewifely skill might often be

<sup>1</sup> Blüntscli, *Theory of the State*, p. 207.

improved by a better business training. The statement is as incapable of refutation as of proof, and must stand simply as an illustration of the attitude of mind in which so many able men approach the subject. As a more thoughtful exponent of a similar view we may turn to Professor Münsterberg, who has made a careful study of the position of American women, in his book upon America. Some allowance must probably be made for the fact that the German and the American mind are of all others the most opposed upon this issue, and it must have been difficult for him to interpret what he saw as an American, or even as an Englishman, would do. He himself points out that in America the whole principle of woman's life is different from what it is in Germany: "In Germany the fundamental principle is that woman is meant for marriage, while for man marriage is only a side issue in life, and this involves from the first an inequality which can only be slightly lessened by those new movements which approximate woman to man. In the American, fundamental equality is the starting-point." Hence it comes that in America a woman's life is regarded as an end in itself; she is educated with a view to her own development and enjoyment, with the result that she no longer seeks in marriage the necessary content and completion of life. Her disinclination to marriage is often intensified by the fact that she feels herself mentally superior to the man whose education has stopped short with his entry into practical life, while she has continued her studies in school and college.



Add again a growing distaste for the routine of household duties, and we have a formidable array of causes which tend to reduce women's inclination for married life, and which have doubtless something to do with the remarkable fall in the rate of increase of the native American population. But our author warns us against the theory of the unattractive blue-stocking. "Her life at college may make the average marriage less attractive to many a young American girl; but it certainly has not made her less attractive to the men."

It seems necessary in considering this position to distinguish two points. There is, first, the alleged effect of education in making women less inclined for marriage; and, secondly, whether it makes her less competent for the duties of married life when she does assume them.

It seems to me highly probable, and for the most part wholly to the good, that as women begin to have wider interests they will cease to regard marriage as the one fact in life which preserves it from being a failure. Amongst a people where there is a large majority of women there must always be a considerable number who do not marry, and for the sake of these alone it would be well that as rich a life as possible should be opened up to women in other directions. But for the sake also of those who do marry, and indeed, of the whole community, it must be right that when a girl decides to accept an offer of marriage she should not do so simply because she sees no other escape from a life of intolerable boredom, or

because "old maids" are looked down upon, or because she has no means of earning an independent living. It does not follow that her disinclination to marriage is any greater than in the days when she did these things, but merely that she is no longer driven to it in face of disinclination. And it matters comparatively little if the number of marriages is fewer if those which are entered upon are better assorted and more capable of a strong family life.

But does not this education also unfit the girls who do marry for the "womanly" duties which are essential to the welfare of the Family? One is tempted to answer with Sydney Smith's question: "Can anything be more absurd than to suppose that the perpetual solicitude a mother feels towards her children can depend upon her ignorance of Greek and mathematics, or that she would desert an infant for a quadratic equation?"

Of course a woman will constantly be driven to choose between pursuing her intellectual studies and attending to Family claims from sheer want of time to carry on both; but in nine cases out of ten her choice will fall upon home and children, and both she and they will reap the full advantage of a trained and disciplined intelligence to guide her affection. An American writer, with a more intimate and understanding knowledge of the situation than could be attained by a foreigner, writes: "It is true of America, as it is not true of any other nation of the world, that any pursuit which a woman shows herself desirous and capable of following, she is free to

follow. And American women have proven themselves very able in very many directions, but in small towns—and three-fifths, at least, of the women of America are in small towns—it is in the making of homes that they are most able, that they do their part best. They make their homes, as artists make great pictures, not so much because they will as because they must. Like great artists, they give to the making themselves; and out of their renunciation, out of their travail, and out of their joy are builded up and welded together these households, simple, happy, and good, which are our greatest national strength, as well as our most typical national achievement. Whatever America may be in the future, it is to-day a nation of small communities; and these communities are merely groups of homes made by American women.”<sup>1</sup>

If this is still true in America, notwithstanding the counter-attractions of life in boarding-houses and hotels of which we hear so much, it is even more true of England. Amongst the great middle classes the home, presided over and managed in every detail by married women, is practically universal. And just in proportion as the education of the women is better, wider, more thorough, the homes lose the aspect of narrowness and self-absorption and conventionality which has been too apt to characterise them in the past, and become fitting nurseries for a nobler generation to follow. Perhaps the fundamental change may be described like this: in a home where

<sup>1</sup> M'Cracken, *The Women of America*, p. 42.



the mother takes an active part or intelligent interest in the wider life of the community, the children will from the first hear matters of public interest mentioned and discussed from a disinterested point of view and with reference to the common welfare. The whole growth and bent of their minds will thus be influenced towards themselves exercising a deliberate and disinterested judgment when they themselves are called upon to meet political or social problems. But in homes where woman's interests are narrowed and her judgment untrained, they will never hear of outside matters except when their father dogmatizes or their mother complains that the spread of education is making the servants useless. And so they too learn to dogmatize and to measure all social and political movements by their own personal convenience. The first and essential step towards an enlightened democracy, a people able to rule the nation wisely, and to find their own interests in the common welfare, is a generation of women fit to be the mothers of such a people, and to make the homes in which wisdom and self-control may be the ruling spirits.

How far can we apply the same thoughts to the position of women in working-class Families? To a large extent the woman who is not in a position to employ servants, and has the actual work of house and children to do, is saved from the dangers to health and temper which lie in wait for the woman of leisure. Moreover, their early contact with the realities and responsibilities of life has developed in

them a natural shrewdness and power of judgment which is in many respects of a higher quality than that produced by education. But there can be no doubt that a higher standard of education for women, and a wider habit of taking an interest in outside affairs, would do more than anything to increase the happiness and efficiency of many a working-class home. “. . . Labourers’ wives are often greatly their husband’s superiors in general education. . . . Superiority of education on the part of the wife never causes any alienation; the man shows no jealousy, the woman no conceit. . . . When, on the other hand, this superiority falls to the man, in addition to his greater knowledge of the outside world, as occurs in the case of highly skilled artisans, non-commissioned officers in both services, the men who rise in the police force, etc., great estrangement results. . . . A woman can share her advantages with a man, and a curious gentleness and refinement is often found among labourers who ‘occupy the seat of the unlearned.’ Every woman is a possible mother, and therefore to some extent a born teacher, but a man can impart little to his wife. The whole unhappiness of the private lives of ‘risen’ men lies in the inferior education of the women they have married.”<sup>1</sup>

But the difference made by education comes out most strikingly in the effects upon the home life of the different occupations followed by the girls before marriage. In some respects service in a well-managed but not wealthy Family is the best possible preparation

<sup>1</sup> Loane, *The Queen's Poor*, pp. 15, 16.

for family life. A girl who has taken part under skilled direction in the work of keeping a home clean and healthy, and a Family of children well trained and well fed, will be able to apply her experience to her own home and her own Family when the time comes. In wealthy Families where large numbers of servants are kept the lessons she learns are too often those of waste and self-indulgence, and attention to appearance rather than essentials. Then she will marry the footman or the butler, and they will keep a public-house or a lodging-house, and will not belong to the working class at all.

Domestic service is still the largest industry for women, but there are of course many others; and it is most noticeable that those girls who are engaged in skilled industries, earning fairly good wages, are better fitted for their home duties afterwards than the girls engaged in rough and unskilled work. Partly, no doubt, it is due to the fact that they are likely to have come from better homes themselves; but just in proportion as their work calls for more intelligence, skill, and patience, and is carried on under better discipline and conditions, it is also a better preparation for the skilled and difficult work of managing a home.

It is noticeable also, and this is a point of utmost importance, that the girls who work at skilled trades under fair conditions are far more careful in the choice of a husband—and it must be remembered that this is the choice of a father for their children—than the girls who earn low wages at unskilled work.



It is sometimes said that to train a girl to earn high wages will only mean that she will have to support her husband. Experience shows, on the contrary, that it is the rougher and less skilled girls who marry the loafers who will afterwards live on their wives' meagre earnings; while the girl who has learned to respect herself as a capable wage-earner will marry a man who knows that his wife's first duties lie in the home.

The most striking exception to this general rule is to be found in some of the textile districts, where men and women have for so long worked side by side as wage-earners, that they have failed to grasp the importance of a redistribution of functions when the wife takes upon herself the additional duties of a mother and housewife. The results of the failure are disastrous from the point of view of the Family, and nothing could so well emphasise the importance of the woman in the Family as the miserable condition of home and children when she is not in the Family but in the mill. Fortunately it is a lesson which the working man himself is apt to learn, and the diminishing proportion of married women who are also wage-earners is an indication of a movement towards a better division of labour. It need not mean, of course, that women will cease altogether to be wage-earners, but only that they will cease to be so during the years when a young Family is dependent upon their care.

There is another point of view from which it has been contended that the modern education of women works through the family for evil upon the human

race as a whole. The biologist argues that the race is strong in proportion as male and female differ in their qualities ; and he is supported by the sociologist, who maintains that in the course of human evolution every forward step sees a greater differentiation between the functions of man and woman. One of Riehl's arguments in favour of emphasising the difference between the occupations of men and women is that the further back you get in the development of culture the less marked you find that difference to be. He points out that amongst the least cultivated peasants, men and women share the same work, and are but slightly differentiated even in dress and appearance ; it would even seem, he says, as if the curse of the Old Testament were removed from women of this class, who suffer hardly at all from the pains of childbirth. One would have thought that this undoubted fact would have made him pause in his argument, and suspect something amiss in a form of progress which involves an increasing curse upon half the human race ; but the inveterate belief of the average man that it is more womanly to suffer than to act, is too strong for him, and we are left with the uncomfortable proposition that as greater womanliness involves greater suffering, and more progress involves more womanliness, so more progress involves greater suffering.

We may find this fact of the comparative immunity of the women whose occupations approximate to those of men illustrated amongst the costermongers and others of their way of living. It depends, of course,

upon the occupation being in itself a healthy one, and preferably in the open air; but given those conditions it seems a mistake to suppose that work, even hard work, is detrimental either to mothers or their infants. A friend who has lived amongst these people for twenty years writes that as her husband "completed his 5000 confinement cases last Christmas, I asked him what he thought of women working up to the end of their 'time,' and he said that he would unhesitatingly say that the woman who worked up to the last had a better time than the woman who rested, as in the case of the worker all the muscles of the body were in good sound condition, so that a quick and easy labour ensued. . . . With regard to working whilst the infant is at the breast, if the work be done at home it does not appear to be detrimental to the mother's health, . . . but if working after childbirth means weaning the infant and bringing it up by hand, then the evil to both child and mother is very considerable."

From the point of view of the Family, and more especially the children, it seems thus beside the mark to insist either that women shall do no work, or that their work shall be different in kind from that of the men. Work in itself is beneficial if it is under healthy conditions, no matter whether it is what is ordinarily called "womanly" or not, and if it does not involve the separation of the mother from her young children.

It is probable that much more conscious experience and study of the facts is required before we can



arrive at any really scientific conclusion as to the effects of the present development of women's education upon future generations. I for one find it impossible to believe that any movement of differentiation between men and women which involves either a stunted mental life or greater physical suffering for the mothers of the race can really be in the right line of progress. If more differentiation is necessary, then we must seek it in some new form, and not, as hitherto, in arbitrarily narrowing the scope of women's activities. But if what is required is merely a large amount of difference between the two parents of a child, it would seem that this is far more effectually secured by the natural law which attracts people of unlike dispositions and physical characteristics together, than by any artificial attempts to sunder the human race into two dissimilar groups, unlike in such a way as to resemble different species rather than the two sexes of the same species. And as we have already seen, a strong family life seems the most potent and natural means for producing and preserving strongly marked differences of character and disposition within a people.

Meanwhile, as usual, facts are rushing ahead of theories, and all we can do is to attempt to interpret them, and to understand them so far as to be able to conform to them wisely. If my reading of the present position of woman in the most representative Families is right, then it is both stronger and more devoted than ever it has been before, just because she is able to bring to it the physical and moral

strength which she has gained from contact with the real world. And as this type becomes universal we shall see all questions of rivalry between men and women become antiquated and disappear, and personal self-seeking and aggressiveness be lost in their mutual helpfulness towards a common end.

✓ What is that common end? Primarily, of course, it is the Family; but ultimately it can be nothing less than the welfare of the community of which the Family itself forms a constituent part. And it is just here that we may look, I think, for the solution of the age-long rivalry between the Family and the State. That the Family should exercise a narrowing and selfish influence over its members is inevitable so long as one of the partners responsible for it is excluded from intelligent participation in the work of the State, and sees in public services only rival claims to those of the Family. Get rid of that narrowing and selfish influence and the Family will become to an extent never known before the source and inspiration of noble and enlightened service to the State. And, on the other hand, in proportion as this is true, the State will recognise the infinite importance of the Family and cease from those insidious attacks upon it which arise mainly from ignorance of its true function.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CONSTITUENT PARTS OF THE FAMILY—*continued*

#### III. THE CHILD IN THE FAMILY

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves  
The tufted beech unfolds in early spring :  
All clad in tenderest green,  
All of the self-same shape.

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet,  
Each year sends forth, yet every mother views  
Her last not least beloved,  
Like its dear self alone.

SARA COLERIDGE.

THE prodigality of babydom when we stumble over it swarming in the streets, or inspect its ordered myriads in the elementary schools, or study its advancing tides translated into statistics, is a thing to baffle the imagination and the heart. Babies by the thousand! by the hundred thousand! How is it possible even to think of them with equanimity. A baby, as we know it, is a thing which in its waking hours at least makes the most exorbitant claims upon the attention and watchfulness of those who are responsible for its welfare; it is essentially a unit, number one, in whatever company it may find itself;



and to think of it in hundreds and thousands seems a contradiction in terms. And rightly considered it is a contradiction in terms. Babies have no corporate existence; there is no proper purpose for which they can be removed from their seclusion in the life of the Family; and it is only by an effort of abstraction that we can think of them as massed together and away from their natural setting.

It is, of course, a perfectly legitimate application of statistics to count the babies, so long as we remember that it is an abstraction, and do not allow ourselves to be seized with panic at our totals. "All these babies to provide for," the alarmists cry; "all to be fed and clothed and nursed and tended; and then to compete with us in our work and professions." And they forget that in real life they come one by one, and that they come only when there are two adult people who have been expecting them for months and have made themselves responsible for their entertainment. Babies are born into Families, to be born again after prolonged nurture into citizenship, and it is only when we leave the Family out of our reckoning that the problem of handling them presents serious difficulties.

So far as the baby is concerned, its position in the Family can never have been materially different from what it is now, and it is difficult to see how it can change much in the future. In one important respect it has certainly improved amongst civilised races, in so far as infanticide is no longer a recognised mode of regulating the population. In another respect it

would seem to have deteriorated, in so far as considerable numbers are deprived of their natural food, and have to make shift with quasi-scientific substitutes. Otherwise its position remains essentially unaltered, for whether it is born of wealthy or of poor parents, and in whatever conditions and surroundings, it continues to be the one absolutely dependent member of the Family, and it continues also to rule by virtue of its helplessness.

Why exactly this helplessness should endow the baby with such power it is not easy to explain. It is not a quality which appeals to most of us when manifested in the adult, or even in children of a riper age. Perhaps it is because we know that in the baby the appeal is wholly unconscious, that there is no *arrière pensée* in it, no premeditated assault upon our sympathies, that we are so ready to yield to it. We feel in a much deeper way, as we do when we approach a nest of fledglings and all the yellow beaks gape wide. The open mouth is irresistible, when it is a simple expression of need with no suspicion about it of design. Our resentment against the older people, capable of filling their own mouths, who pursue the same method of evoking our sympathies, is a measure of our readiness to respond to the genuine appeal. There is no question of the baby's needs being assumed; they are obvious and inevitable, and amongst ordinary human beings the obvious and inevitable must always prevail.

And so the baby, for the time being, and until the next baby comes, occupies a unique position in the

household. Then he is dethroned, and takes his place amongst the rank and file of the other ex-babies. If, indeed, he happens to be an "eldest son" he may preserve another kind of prerogative, but that is incidental to a peculiar type of Family.

But so long as he remains within the Family the child never entirely loses the uniqueness which attached to him as a baby; he is never just one amongst the others as he is at school for the purposes of the teacher, or in still later life as he is one amongst the others for the purposes of the census-enumerator and tax-collector. The concentration of tenderness and attention upon the first few months of his helplessness continues, though in a less degree, as he becomes gradually more independent of it, and to the mother at least he is always "like his dear self alone." And there can, I think, be no doubt that this differentiation by affection within the Family group is a most important factor in emphasising and developing the individuality of the child. "Institution" children are notably slower to develop than children who are brought up with their parents, and there is a tendency amongst them for the somewhat troublesome qualities of initiative, enterprise and individuality to be ruled out by the only less valuable qualities which are conformable to discipline and routine. It is for this reason that social schemes, which would dispense with the Family, and would have the child born straight into the State without its intermediate shelter, seem foredoomed to failure. The State can deal only with classes, not with indi-



viduals, and the child which is not dealt with as an individual from the first seems likely never to become one in the fullest sense.

Perhaps one way of bringing out the essential features of the relation between the child and the Family will be to contrast it with the quite different relation between the child and the school. There is an increasing tendency to-day to regard the school as a substitute for the home, and thus to a large extent to stultify the work of both. An eminent writer has recently declared that "schools are designed to curb and replace the evil influences of home," and this is only an extreme way of stating the prevalent view that the school should be responsible, not only for the intellectual development of the children, but for their morals and manners, their character, also. Another writer, an American describing New York, makes the statement that the home is passing away, and that in future the school must be the world of the child, whether working, learning, or playing. And it is notable that this view obtains for rich and poor alike; among the rich, who tacitly disclaim responsibility by sending their children to boarding schools at the earliest possible age, and allowing the holidays to be a time of complete license, and for the poor, to whom the elementary schools are now offering to feed, clothe, nurse, and doctor their children, as well as teach them. It is worth considering, then, what are the essential differences between home and school life which may be worth preserving for the sake of the child.

In the first place, I think it is fair to say that, generally speaking, the child is valued in the home for what he *is*, while in the school he is valued in the main for what he is to be (I disregard of course his grant earning value). In the school the child is being prepared for his future life only ; all that he does has its meaning with reference to the future. His course of instruction, his exercise, his games—all are planned for and justified by their effect upon his development. His sums, his exercises, his copy-books, the long hours of work which he and his master spend together, are primarily justified only by the fact that they are more or less necessary steps in the creation of a man.

In a good home this point of view will, of course, not be absent, but there the child is valued also for what he *is*, sometimes, indeed, too exclusively. We all know the fond mother who cannot bear that her babies should become boys and girls, and dreads the time when her boys and girls will pass into men and women. But who can question the incalculable benefit to a child, as indeed to all of us, however old, of feeling that his mere presence gives pleasure to some one, that some one really cares to know all his little secrets and fancies and troubles, and that there is some one with whom he lives in an equality of affection where differences of age and intellect are merged? It is this which forms the real link between the generations, and makes of child life not merely a preparation but something infinitely valuable in itself.

The next difference I would note is, that the

relation of the child to the home has in it far more of mutual service and reciprocity than is possible in the school. Children are naturally eager to share in the occupations and work of their elders, to do the things which "grown up" people do, and in any well-regulated Family care is taken that this natural impulse of the child receives satisfaction and guidance. Little duties about the house, little services to other members of the Family, are possible from a very early age, and contribute far more than any direct teaching can do to make the child realise how social life depends upon mutual helpfulness. In school the relation is inevitably far more one-sided; the whole thing exists for the sake of the child, and he is not, generally speaking, expected, nor indeed allowed, to have any share in carrying it on. He must of course exert himself if he is to benefit from the teaching, but the exertion will obviously be in his own interests, even though the immediate motive may be to please the teacher. In short, while home life involves give and take, school life is apt to be much take and very little give.

The contrast is deepened by the fact that the relation with the Family is, normally, a permanent one. Hence, though it begins in absolute dependence of the child upon its parents, it gradually develops—at any rate amongst the majority of the people—into one of mutual support and assistance. The child knows from very early years that the time is coming when he will be expected to take his share in the responsibilities of the Family; later on when he will himself



be responsible for the maintenance of a Family ; and, later still, when his parents will look to him for some return of the care and support which he received from them as a child. But in the school there is no such natural development of the relation ; the child *may* grow up into the schoolmaster, but only in exceptional cases. The relation is necessarily a temporary and, for the most part, a one-sided one.<sup>1</sup>

Another difference between school and home emerges when we consider what are the qualities which we desire our children to have when they leave the shelter of childhood and come face to face with the larger life of the community.

To speak first quite generally, we want them to be at least as well equipped as those who will be their future companions, and to some extent their competitors ; we want them to know as much, and to be prepared to take their place amongst them without being handicapped through ignorance, and for this we look largely to the schools to which we have entrusted them. This is true from the point of view of the nation no less than from the point of view of the individual parents ; no nation desires either that there should be an incompetent class within itself, nor that its citizens shall be less competent than those of other nations.

But also we do *not* wish that *our* children should be turned out just like their companions. To every

<sup>1</sup> Hence it is in the home far more than in the school that the future citizen learns the lesson of mutual responsibility and helpfulness, upon which alone a true civic life can be based.

parent his own children are unique; they have their own characteristics in which he delights—partly, no doubt, because he thinks they come from him—and he does not want to see these obliterated. I suppose no parent, however indifferent, would like to be told that his children were just like any one else's. Now the education of family life, as I have already maintained, consists largely in the development—conscious and unconscious—of these special characteristics, family characteristics, and in turning them to good account; a very different matter from either letting them run wild or from trying to eliminate them. And I would urge again that this is all to the good from the point of view of the community also. It is only in this way that we can preserve that diversity of temperament and ability which adds so much to the richness of social life, and provides citizens suitable for every kind of function.

In the school the tendency is an opposite one. It is often said nowadays that the teacher must make a special study of every child under his care, and have a special scheme of development for each. To some extent, no doubt, this must be the case with a teacher who is good at his work; different children will respond differently to his teaching, and he must more or less adapt himself to their needs and natures. But if this view is pushed far, there is a danger of losing one of the most valuable elements in school life. One of the principal lessons which the child has to learn at school is that of conforming to universal laws; to feel that he has to play up to

what is expected of a boy of his age, to overcome his own special difficulties or likings for the sake of promoting the work of the class. Now this discipline tends to disappear so soon as he has any suspicion that the master is playing down to him. I especially question the advisability of making lessons too easy, of trying to turn work into play; there can hardly be any quality we more desire for our children than the power to face a difficulty and overcome it, and it is a quality we cannot begin too soon to develop. But I am given to understand that the theory of making lessons easy and entertaining is now driven to such extremes that the whole burden of them falls upon the teacher, instead of being at least shared by the pupil. All difficulties are smoothed away by illustrations and explanations and devices of one sort and another, until the knowledge to be imparted has become like those patent pre-digested breakfast foods which America produces. Now, I cannot think that the digestion which has its work done for it is likely to be strong; and still less can I think that the intellect which is catered for in this way is likely to prove of much use when face to face with realities. An American who is strongly impressed with this mistake of the conscientious teacher writes: "This assumption of the entire burden upon themselves, and the extreme to which the discarding of textbooks is now carried, are among the agencies that are making our city children strangers to thoughtful books, readers at best of nothing but feeble or exaggerated fiction. Who can estimate the loss



incurred by a generation growing up without this means of companionship with the master-minds of all the ages, this resource and consolation in many dreary and painful hours. It is equalled only by the misfortune to the State, which must accord the duties of citizenship to men unable to grasp the real meaning of what they read, and naturally more likely to hear the talk of fanatics and demagogues than of sound thinkers."

I should say, then, that for the teacher to take upon himself too much of the burden of education is to deprive the child of one of the greatest benefits as well as pleasures of school-days ; since to have learned to overcome a difficulty instead of avoiding it is not only an important lesson for future strength and happiness, but also the source of one of the purest pleasures which life can afford. And it is a discipline which is less easy to give in home life, where the atmosphere is naturally one of helpfulness. A wise parent, it is true, will not respond too readily to every childish appeal for help ; when no danger of permanent injury is involved he will let the children work their own way through their little difficulties even at the cost of some momentary trouble or distress. But the difficulties do not arise naturally and progressively in the same way in the home as they do at school.

I have dwelt upon the contrast between home and school in order to bring out how each tends to lose in its own peculiar efficiency when it attempts to usurp the functions of the other. There is one other point

of a somewhat different nature, where the rivalry would almost seem to be inevitable, and where jealousy of the school has found very strong expression. Every generation, I suppose, has its complaint to make of the one which is to succeed it, and we must not attach too much weight to the grumblings of those who see a general falling off since the days when *they* were young. But there is one complaint which is almost universal, and which does seem to touch a somewhat unlovely characteristic of the present day. I refer to the accusation that there is among the children a prevailing and increasing want of respect towards their elders, more especially, perhaps, towards their parents. Nor are the complainants slow to attribute this tendency to the influence of the school, where, they think, the children are not taught to order themselves as they should towards their elders and betters.

In considering how far the accusation carries weight, we must distinguish between various elements in the change which has taken place. In the first place, there is no doubt that it is to a large extent merely a change of convention, for which the parents themselves are as much responsible as any one. Children are no longer taught to address their parents as Sir or Ma'am, or to observe the formalities proper to two or three generations ago. Again, they are now encouraged to take part in the conversation and interests of their elders instead of observing the old maxim of *our* nursery days, that children should be seen and not heard. Partly this is due to new views

upon education, but partly also to the change we have already considered in the basis of the parents' authority in the home. There is nothing inconsistent between freedom of intercourse and the loyalty which is the essential spirit of the modern Family, and where we have the perfect love which casteth out fear, such freedom of intercourse is its spontaneous expression. So far no failure of real respect is involved. There may indeed have been more disrespect concealed under the old formalities, more rebellion under the old despotic authority than is implied in the familiarity of to-day. But to some extent the evil complained of is real, and is much to be deprecated in the interests of young and old alike; and it is also true, I think, that it is an evil which the spread of education has brought more or less naturally with it. I have already suggested the reason. In the old days, when the great majority of the people had little access to books, still less to schools, the only source of knowledge was the accumulated wisdom and experience of the older people, of the fathers and mothers of the community. When the young folks had to turn to them for guidance and information at every step, they felt their inferiority and behaved accordingly. Now the case is to a large extent reversed. At school the children find themselves in touch with sources of knowledge which may never have been open to their parents. The teacher is a mine of information, and if the young people want to know anything about past, present, or future, there is the whole literature of history and science to take



the place of their grandfathers' recollections. In consequence the young are really apt to feel themselves very superior to the old, and this soon reflects itself in their bearing. Perhaps it is too much to expect that in school the children should be taught that book-learning is not the most important kind of knowledge. If so, the solution of the difficulty must rest with the parents themselves. If mere superiority of age will no longer enable them to maintain their prestige, then they must seek to excel in other respects also; we are setting a much higher standard for the children, and it will not be a bad thing if it reacts by forcing our own standard a little higher. There is perhaps too much tendency, as we reach the mature age of thirty or forty, to regard ourselves as finished products, and to let character and intellect lie dormant for the future. When this is so, we cannot much wonder if the children, from whom we demand such constant efforts to improve themselves, should become critical in their turn.

And this leads me to another aspect of the relation: from the importance of the Family for the Child, to the importance of the Child for the Family. Of course children are "troublesome," in the sense that they demand constant activity, both of mind and body, from those directly responsible for them. But activity is life; and it is perhaps not too much to say that the majority of mankind are saved from mental and physical stagnation by the claims of their children. No doubt there are some who think that they could have "made a career" if they had not

been weighed down by the burden of a Family and the necessity of constant toil; but it is very easy to deceive ourselves as to what we might have done under different circumstances, and for one man whose higher life has been crushed by the needs of his Family, a hundred thousand have been stimulated to a higher level of industry and efficiency.

"They must hinder your work very much," I said the other day to a mother busy about the kitchen with two-year-old clinging to her skirt. "I'd never get through my work without them," was the instant rejoinder, and in it lay the answer to much of our sentimental commiseration of hard-worked mothers. It may be hard to carry on the drudgery of daily life with the little ones clamouring around; it is ten times harder without, for sheer lack of something to make it worth while. And how often they act as a restraint as well as an incentive perhaps only mothers know. "I am very glad this feeding of the children in the school did not come in while mine went to school," remarked one; and when asked for an explanation she replied that her husband was rather a drinking man, and if he had not had to bring something home for the children, of whom he was very fond, he would have been far worse than he was.

One of the most curious misdirections of sympathy has been that which dwells upon the monotony of the mother's life. One writer carries this view to the extreme by laying down that "home is the girl's prison and the woman's workhouse." Now if this had been said of the factory or workshop where child

life is excluded, or if it had referred to the woman who earns her living in solitude, many would agree. But where there are children who are living a natural life, monotony is the one evil for which there is absolutely no room. No adult human being is capable of the infinite variety of the child, and a life with children is essentially a life where it is the unexpected which happens. It is when the children leave that monotony threatens; but fortunately in a well-ordered Family there is generally a new generation arriving before the last one has altogether ceased to be "troublesome."



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE NAME AND THE HOUSE

THERE are two facts so intimately interwoven with the Family as we know it, that it is difficult for us to conceive of it as existing apart from them. The one is the Name, in which all its members share, and by which they are known to the outside world; the other is the House or habitation within which its members dwell, and in which they find seclusion from the outside world. Neither of these can be said to be essential in the sense that they actually form constituent parts of the family; yet both contribute in a very marked degree to its strength and preservation, and cannot be altogether omitted from the present study.

To consider first the family Name. Amongst members of the same family circle this is rarely if ever used; they have no need of a distinguishing mark to tell them who are relations and who are merely visitors or friends or servants; and for purposes of identification the Christian or forename suffices. But in the absence of a strong family likeness there is nothing but the name to enable us to classify the people we casually see or hear about

into their respective Families, which means really to assign to them a definite and recognisable position in the community. It seems probable that originally, and amongst some peoples at least, the family name would derive a great part of its importance from the fact that to certain Families within the State certain public duties were assigned; and for official purposes and in order to know who was responsible for those duties it was essential that each individual should bear the distinguishing mark of his Family. Thus amongst the Jews every member of the Family of Levi was by birth a priest. In communities where the distribution of function by hereditary caste no longer survives, the name loses this official significance, and a further distinguishing mark which has no reference to the family, such as M.P. or L.C.C., has to be added.

In the higher ranks of "society" the family name still bears a sort of quasi-official significance in that it enables the expert to determine quickly and easily the details arising out of considerations of social conventions or precedence. And even in circles where the man is taken "on his own merits," the family name is an index to far more of those "merits" or characteristics than he can show to any but his most intimate friends.<sup>1</sup>

It is in our intercourse with the external world, between people who have no intimate relations, that the need for the family name arises; and in proportion as the Family is self-contained and powerful as

<sup>1</sup> Just as to the gardener the name "Pippin" or "Bergamot" suggests characteristics common to many varieties of Pippins or Bergamots.

against the community we find the family name least in evidence, and the forename taking on other distinguishing marks. The natural history of naming is a study in itself,<sup>1</sup> and here we are concerned with it only in reference to the Family; but though the distinction between the name which belongs to an individual as such, and the name which assigns to him his place in a Family, is very definite, yet there is a frequent transition between the two, forenames becoming surnames and surnames forenames; while there are certain processes of naming which are constantly repeating themselves in social history.

One of the most complicated systems of naming was that of the Romans, and as we have taken our illustration of the Patriarchal Family from them, so also we may take their system of names, though only in its most general outline. The normal Roman had four names, or rather four kinds of names. First there was the name which belongs to the individual as such, the name "with which he is born and with which he dies," the name which his parents choose and give to him as his first and most intimate possession. How far the choice is an arbitrary one, and how far it is determined by family or other considerations, we will note presently. This is the name to which what we now call the "Christian" name corresponds in general.

Then there was the gentile name, which denoted to what race or Family in the largest sense the individual belonged. This had its origin in various

<sup>1</sup> See *Encyclopædia Britannica*—article, "Names."



ways; it might refer to some remote common ancestor, or to the district to which the Family belonged, or to the arms which it bore. It corresponds in general to the name of the Scotch clan, perhaps to the name of primitive tribes, and in part to our "family name." But these two by themselves become insufficient to particularise the individual when the clan becomes large, or when the choice of individual or forenames is small. Hence a third name is necessary to limit still further the group to which the individual is assigned; and that is done by adding the name of the head of the family group in its narrower and stricter sense. Amongst the Romans this was the head of the Patriarchal Family, which included not only wife and children, but slaves and all dependants; and the "patronymic" was thus a bond between men of highest and of lowest estate. A striking parallel to this usage was to be found until lately in modern slaveholding communities; but for the most part the relation now indicated by it is strictly that between parent and child. It is still to be found wherever the family community consisting of several generations and households persists, notably in Russia. What is wanted here for purposes of daily intercourse is a name to indicate, not to what Family an individual belongs, but of which brother he is the child; thus Peter, son of Paul, would be distinguished from Peter, son of Andrew. The usage is common also in districts such as Wales, where the variety of family names is very small. Here it becomes quite necessary

to distinguish the individual in some other way than by the combination of his Christian and family name, and though there are other methods, perhaps the commonest is by the addition of his father's or mother's Christian name. How old this device is, is shown by the surviving prefixes which signify "the son of," "Fitz" in Norman English, "Mac" in Scotch, "Ap" in Welsh (Pritchard = ap Richard, Price = ap Rice).

Finally we find amongst the Romans the cognomen, originally like the forename in being strictly peculiar to the individual, but unlike it in that it is given only after the recipient has passed early childhood, is not used within the family circle, and is not recognised in strictly official documents. In a sense it is even more individual than the forename, in that it frequently indicates some purely personal peculiarity; later it becomes hereditary, and so loses something of this individuality, but in its original use it corresponds very closely to what we call a "nickname." Here again we find an exact modern parallel in districts where family names are few in variety; personal peculiarities or personal occupations are frequently used in Wales and other districts in addition to the proper name for purposes of identification; and that these tend to become hereditary, and so to become family names in our modern sense, any list of names in common use would abundantly make manifest. In a note to *Guy Mannering* Scott writes: "The distinction of individuals by nicknames when they possess no property is still common on the

Border, and indeed necessary, from the number of persons having the same name. In the small village of Lustruther, in Roxburghshire, there dwelt, in the memory of man, four inhabitants called Andrew, or Dandie, Oliver. They were distinguished as Dandie Eassil-gate, Dandie Wassil-gate, Dandie Thumbie, and Dandie Dumbie. The two first had their names from being eastward and westward in the street of the village; the third from something peculiar in the conformation of his thumb; the fourth from his taciturn habits." The passage to which this note is appended is itself so appropriate to the whole subject that I will quote it here: "Ye see, sir," said an old shepherd, rising and speaking very slow, "the folks hereabout are a' Armstrongs and Elliots, and sic like—twa or three given names—and so, for distinction's sake, the lairds and farmers have the names of their places that they live at—as, for example, 'Tam o' Todshaw,' 'Will o' the Flat,' 'Habbie o' Sorbietrees,' and our good master here, 'o' the Charlies-hope.' Aweel, sir, and then the inferior sort o' people, ye'll observe, are kend by sorts o' by-names, some o' them, as Glaiket Christie, and the Deuke's Davie, or may be, like this lad Gabriel, by his employment—as, for example, Tod Gabbie, or Hunter Gabbie."

Under certain circumstances the forename itself, though properly speaking strictly individual, may come to have a kind of indirect significance. Amongst the patrician Romans the choice of a forename for their male children was very limited; at one time



only eighteen such names were in use,<sup>1</sup> and particular Families were limited to a still smaller cycle. Moreover, these names, in contrast with the usage of the family name, were reserved for the use of sons of the house in the stricter sense; so that there must have been a time when the forename indicated not only gentle birth, but also the actual Family to which the bearer belonged. That by degrees the plebeians should appropriate the patrician names amongst other patrician privileges was, as Mommsen points out, natural enough; and the process is paralleled in our own times by the eagerness with which the democracy seek out for their children names which used to be considered appropriate for the aristocracy alone.

All vestiges of monopoly in Names have now disappeared, but traces still linger amongst us of the clinging of a Family to a particular series of names. There are probably few Families in which some at least of the children are not "called after" some previous member of the Family. In other countries this is perhaps even more the case than with us: "Beim hohen Adel und den echten Bauern sucht die Familie selbst ihren kleinen Kreis herkömmlichen Vornamen erblich beizubehalten, und wenn alle Prinzen eines Hauses Friedrich Wilhelm und alle Jungen einer Bauernsippenschaft Hans und Peter heissen, so liegt beiden das gleiche Motiv konzentrierten Familienbewusstseins zu Grunde."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Mommsen, *Römische Forschungen*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Riehl, *Die Familie*, p. 159.

But the choice of the forename has often a significance even wider than that of the Family or class. Our use of the term "Christian name" itself implies definite religious ceremonies, though the implication is no longer always justified. Riehl points out again how the names current at any period reflect the social mind or movements of that period. In the earlier Middle Ages, he tells us, the German people called their children after the heroes of their own race, and purely German names prevailed. Later, under the growing influence of the Roman church, the Greek and Latin names from the stories of the saints pushed out the old German, and in their turn made way in the Reformation time for Biblical names from both Old and New Testament. "To-day families of the nobility turn again to the mediæval names of chivalry, the peasant holds fast to the traditions of the last few centuries, while in the flat and genteel bourgeois world an eclecticism rules which amounts to complete confusion. . . . The name no longer characterises the personality, the family, the rank, the calling. It sinks into a purely external sign."

It is easy to trace similar influences in other countries. The Presbyterian movement in England and Scotland introduced a series of Biblical and quasi-theological names, many of which sound most incongruous to modern ears, and it is probable that the distinction between aristocratic and plebeian names dates from the struggle between Normans and Saxons, and was reinforced by the hatred of Cavalier

and Roundhead. Now there is a tendency for the aristocrats to seek piquancy in names of rustic association, while in other classes the caprice of choice reflects every passing incident of the day. A popular novelist will be responsible for a generation of Guys or Marcellas; and a popular preacher or statesman or poet scatters namesakes all over the land. And if there were any chance of forgetting the date of the South African campaign the historian would only need to consult the ages of the unfortunate children whose names record its victories.

The true family name is far less subject to caprice and fashion in that it is with few exceptions hereditary. Hence it reflects or commemorates not passing events or moods in the external world, but something in the history or circumstances or nature of the Family itself when it first became recognised as an independent self-contained group. And it is interesting in this connection to note how frequently the word chosen to designate the Family is the word which represents either the place from which the Family comes, in many cases the family estate, or the occupation in which the Family was engaged. These, as we have seen, have always been two of the most powerful factors in preserving the unity of the Family; and they perfect their work in this direction when they also give the name which is to be both the outward sign of the Family and an additional bond between its members.

For in proportion as the family community became dispersed the family Name would become



important, not only as a means of identification to outsiders, but also as a tie to hold the scattered members of the Family together; in the absence of a common designation it would be next to impossible for a widespread cousinhood even to know, much less to maintain communication with, its various members. For purposes of merely individual identification the use of a "cognomen" or "nickname" is sufficient; and it would probably be found that in large communities where the use of these to the exclusion of the family Name is common (as whenever large numbers of labourers associate together), there all family ties but the very closest are quickly lost sight of.

### THE HOUSE

It may be doubted whether the House was primarily a protection against the weather or against the intrusion of "other people." It certainly serves both functions, more or less imperfectly; and which is the predominant motive at any time or place probably depends upon the climate. But it is significant that popular usage does not dignify by the name of House the mere "shelter" which is open to all comers, though it keeps out the weather. Like the Name, the House serves both to hold the members of the Family together and to guard them from confusion with, or intrusion from, members of other Families, and it does so in an even more marked and obvious way in so far as bricks and mortar are more solid and tangible than words.

Houses are nowadays built for other purposes than the reception of single Families, and for that reason it would have been convenient to use the word Home to represent the House or part of a house which serves to shelter more or less permanently the single Family with its dependants. But unfortunately the word Home has itself been misapplied to institutions which share few of the characteristics of family life, and it will perhaps be less misleading to adhere to the word House, defining it to mean any shelter from the weather which is reserved for the use of a particular Family.

It is an essential feature of the House in this sense that it can be closed against outsiders. If it is nothing more than a gipsy's van, or the shelter of cave or tree, so long as its limits are respected by the rest of the community, the privacy and consecutive-ness of family life can be preserved, and no longer. And this power of exclusion is not of merely negative value, exercised *against* the outsider; it gives rise to the whole range of virtues and rights and duties which gather around the conceptions of hospitality and guest and host. To hold the balance true between the duties of the house towards the outside world, in the exercise of hospitality, and the duties of the house towards the Family in preserving its privacy, is no small part in the problem of its management; the family life may as easily become swamped in a multiplicity of guests, as it may become selfish in its exclusiveness.

The size of the House is not an essential feature;

the definite space which is held sacred to the family life may be a palace, or it may be a single room, and in so far as a palace is more liable to intrusion it is always possible that the single room may be more of a home. But neither of these extremes represents the typical family House which is built with reference to the needs of a Family.

Riehl points out how domestic architecture has changed in proportion as the conception and organisation of the Family itself has changed. His own theory of the House is that it should be designed to hold three or four Families with their common ancestor and their dependants; a conception corresponding rather to the needs of the patriarchal than of the modern Family. There are two tendencies in particular which he notices and deprecates. The one is the tendency to abandon the large "living-room," where the whole Family lived together by day, carrying on their various occupations, and to substitute a series of smaller rooms for the use of particular members—one room for the man, another for his wife, another for the children. In quite modern houses we may notice a reaction in favour of the family room, but it is probably incompatible with the development of intellectual work, such as that of the student or artist or musician.

The other tendency which Riehl deprecates is the modern way of building "from without in," instead of "from within out," that is, of building the house to suit the street, instead of to suit the needs of the Family. More especially he laments the disappear-



ance from German houses of the "Erker," or overhanging oriel windows, for the "Erker" was the corner assigned to the unmarried relative of the household, who there lived as one of the Family, and yet, to some extent, apart from it. But the "Erker" spoiled the line of the street, police regulations abolished it, and the elderly relative has lost her corner in the family house. In the same way, he thinks, "in Society and in the Family also we build symmetrically and mechanically from without inwards, instead of organically from within outwards."<sup>1</sup>

It was in keeping with this change that the fashion grew up of numbering the houses. "The organic house had a name, the symmetrical house has only a number." And where symmetry has reached its fullest development even the streets lose their names and are identified by numbers or letters of the alphabet.

It is not, of course, purely want of imagination which has led to the substitution of numbers for names; in towns it is a distinct convenience to have a system of numbering both streets and houses which will ensure them being easily found. On the other hand, it is not impossible to devise a system of naming which should indicate the locality, and yet be more interesting and more easily remembered than bare numbers. There is a small district in one of the dullest, poorest parts of London where the names of the streets suggest that the vestrymen responsible for them must just have returned from their summer

<sup>1</sup> Riehl, *Die Familie*, p. 198.

holidays. Cambridge Street, York Street, Boston Street, Weymouth Street, Tuilerie Street, serve at least to bring pleasant associations into a somewhat dreary region; but it is when we find Shap Street, Scawfell Street, and Appleby Street in close proximity that we realise what use might be made of a geographical or, possibly, even an historical scheme of naming.

The possibility of recovering names for houses in the town seems very remote; yet every one who *can* make his house significant enough to carry a name will do so. The speculative builder of the suburbs knows his business when he labels each little dwelling-place as Ivy Villa, or Laburnum House, or The Gables; there is at least the suggestion of something distinctive, some quality sufficiently marked to give rise to a name. It is a feeling analogous to that attaching to the names of human beings; were it not for the greater mobility of men as compared with houses there would be nothing impossible in substituting a system of numbers and letters for our present system of names. But when it is done, as in prisons, we feel that the people numbered have suffered a serious loss of individuality, almost of humanity. And in a lesser degree we feel that our houses suffer a loss when they are known merely as one in a numerical series.

One of the most marked differences between town and country is, that in the town the house is ceasing to represent externally the needs and character of the Family inhabiting it. It is not the case, as is so

often assumed by writers on town life, that monotonous, dreary streets necessarily represent monotonous, dreary lives; what they really represent are three factors entirely independent of family life: scarcity of land, building bye-laws, and speculative builders. In the country these factors are less universal, though, as a matter of fact, even in the country comparatively few houses are built to suit the needs of the actual Families occupying them. But in the country there is generally some room for the Family to express itself externally, either by actual addition or ornamentation to the house itself, or at any rate in the garden, which is a continuation of the house. Even in the town, in the poorest and dullest streets, this power is not entirely absent, small decorations adorn many of the houses, such as window boxes, ingeniously contrived to look like miniature garden palings. And inside the house, however small, the Family still finds room to express itself in furniture and arrangements. It is significant in this respect that amongst town-dwellers the "home" means not the actual house, but the furniture which bears the impress of their use and needs and aspirations. Hence the comparative readiness with which they move from one house to another—they take their home with them; while the country Family in moving leaves a large part of its home in the house and garden upon which it has impressed its own personality. But to say that the houses in a street are all alike because they all have the same number of doors and windows in the same places, and are of approximately the same



colour, is much like saying that human beings are all alike because they all have the same number of limbs and features in the same places, and are of approximately the same colour. It is within that we must look for characteristic differences. And when we look within we find that in every house which is sufficiently inhabited, whether by rich or poor, the Family leaves its characteristic mark upon every detail of adornment and furniture, even the furniture which is turned out by the hundred thousand. I remember one extreme case in which every small article in a room had been gilded all over, with an effect dazzling to the outsider, but no doubt eminently satisfactory and expressive to the owner.

Though the monotonous line of the streets does not represent the lives of the Families inhabiting them, no doubt it reacts upon them indirectly by curtailing their field of self-expression in one important direction. How deeply inherent this need is in human nature may be seen in the eagerness with which all sorts and conditions of town-dwellers will grasp at any piece of land, however minute, which they can transform into a garden. It is a wonderful sight to watch the construction of a row of small suburban houses, each with its small plot in front and small strip behind. The builder leaves them hard and dusty and full of brickbats, a dreary spectacle. In six months, if the seasons are favourable, they are blossoming with every colour of the rainbow, and each presents its characteristic difference. One aspires to roses, another is content with

sunflowers ; the scarlet of the Virginian creeper competes with the purple and white of the clematis next door ; the utilitarian cherishes scarlet runners and strawberries, while the father of small children has a tiny lawn for the babies to roll upon. And just here and there the weeds are left to run riot and bear witness to another type of Family.

I must raise again here, though briefly, a question which I have discussed before,<sup>1</sup> and on which my view has been called in question. This is not the place in which to discuss the Housing problem, but it is relevant to ask : Is it possible for family life to be carried on in the overcrowded condition of our large towns ? My answer remains that it is not only possible, but that it is constantly and successfully done. That there are difficulties peculiar to town life I fully agree, but not primarily because the houses are small, or because Families are confined to one or two rooms. That is not a condition peculiar to town alone ; there are country dwellings in every land where the Families are just as cramped for room as in the town ; indeed, one important cause of the migration which is taking place into the towns is just that the young people find no house-room to start new Families in the country. And whereas in the town there is always the possibility of taking another room as the children begin to earn, in the country there may be no such possibility, and then they may be really forced to leave the Family. That even this does not necessarily mean

<sup>1</sup> In *The Strength of the People*.

its breaking up, every Family knows which has sent its sons and daughters out into the world without losing its hold upon their affections. We must look for other reasons than mere scarcity of house-room for weakness of family life, which is apt to show itself in crowded districts.

There are several directions at the present day in which the idea of a house devoted to the sole use of one Family seems to have been abandoned. The hotel and the boarding-house, the common lodging-house, the workhouse, the prison, the sisterhood, the asylum, the school, the settlement—all these stand on the same footing in that their inhabitants have more or less permanently preferred, or have had assigned to them, the life of another community than that of the Family, and have chosen their dwelling accordingly. With many it is a matter of quite temporary convenience, a mere interlude for business or holiday, in the normal family life. Of those who have chosen it as a permanent form of life in preference to the privacy of the family house, the majority are endeavouring to lessen the responsibilities of life by cutting out the burden of "housekeeping." So far the motives which actuate the habitués of hotels and boarding-houses seem to be much the same as those by which men and women of less wealth are moved to descend to lodging-houses and shelters and work-houses, rather than make the exertion of keeping up a home of their own. The greater facility of life on this level is undoubted; but it is one of the instances



in which greater facility seems to be loss rather than gain. We hear much of the spread of boarding-house and hotel life, both here and in America, but in order to estimate the real strength of the movement we ought to know also how many of those who enter upon it weary of it after a few years, and are glad to resume the greater richness of home life with all its difficulties.

Perhaps one of the most interesting revivals in art which awaits us, which indeed is already manifesting itself, is that of domestic architecture. No doubt the prevailing idea of a dwelling-place in the builder's mind is still that of a square box divided into compartments; but there are few parts of the country where we may not see signs that we are once more awakening to the idea that a house may be beautiful as well as useful. And this is true not only of the houses of the few, but, what is far more important, of the homes of the many also. Even the builders of suburban villas and country cottages are beginning to realise their responsibilities in this matter, and to find that houses with a certain amount of character and individuality are more attractive.

Before concluding this chapter I must point out again that the Name and the House are alike in the double function they perform for the Family. On the one hand, they both emphasise its exclusiveness and assign its limitations; on the other hand, they both serve as instruments by which it transcends its

exclusiveness and limitations. The Family which opens itself to the admission of a new member (whether wife or child or adopted child), does so formally by the gift of its most intimate and inalienable possession, its Name; while all to whom the shelter of the House is open are in a peculiar sense members of the Family so long as they avail themselves of it.

## CHAPTER XV

### CONCLUSION

IF the foregoing sketch of the Family in its history and present constitution is even approximately true, we are justified in regarding it as an original and probably indispensable institution in human society. However it may vary in form and strength, no race has been found in which it does not exist in some form, and no people has advanced far in civilisation in which it has not been highly organised and firmly knit together.

But we find that this organisation may be motived and sustained in very different ways, at different stages of a people's life, and amongst different peoples. We find, for instance, one form of the patriarchal Family, perhaps the most rigid and highly organised form of all, based upon a religion, upon a system of ancestor-worship. Nearer to ourselves we find another form, hardly less permanent and rigid, based upon a system of landed property, as in agricultural communities, or in the feudal Family which elaborated itself by means of primogeniture into something very like that based upon ancestor-worship. And in our own day we find the modern Family which has



freed itself both from the spiritual tyranny of ancestor-worship and the material tyranny of landed property, but has inherited and preserved the best traditions of both.

For the modern Family is in no sense a weakened or degenerate form. Its strength lies in the fact that in it we are attaining on the one hand to a higher knowledge of the true spiritual forces which bind the generations together, on the other hand to a better theory of material prosperity. If the sons of the modern Family do not dread the avenging spirits of their ancestors, yet they recognise the compelling power of the traditions and qualities bequeathed by those ancestors, and fear to fall below them. If the father of the modern Family has lost or relinquished the power which he exercised over wife and children as autocrat in an industrial community, or by his hold upon the family property, he has found a stronger basis for his authority, a firmer hold upon their affections, in the loyalty which responds to a wise and generous rule. And the recognition of the fact that a more unfailing source of material prosperity lies in personal qualities than in either land or money, has enabled the modern Family to maintain itself independently of inherited wealth, while it has restored the younger brothers to their equality of sonship.

And this development of the modern Family has a new significance for the State. As we have seen, State and Family have always been intimately connected in their mutual influence. From time to time

the State has made strenuous efforts to mould the Family according to its needs; but ultimately the State itself must always be moulded by the Family, since it is in the Family that the citizen is made. Now the development of the modern Family has meant the restoration of the younger brothers, and the restoration of the younger brothers means Democracy. It means, that is, the absence of all privilege but what is conceded by loyalty in the interests of the community. But, as we have seen, there are two types of younger brothers. There is the type of which the true modern Family is constituted: courageous, enterprising, self-reliant, and self-controlled; and these are the strength of the nation and the salt of the earth. There is also the type which is characteristic of the feudal Family in its worst form: timid, selfish, with no higher ambition than to find a "soft job" and draw upon the public purse; it was these younger brothers who were the first to claim the "right to work" on their own terms and at the expense of the State. Both notes are sounded in our Democracy of to-day, and the fortunes of the nation depend upon which prevails.

It is inevitable that to some of my readers the thought will have occurred that there are Families known to them which serve no such purpose as those which I have tried to indicate, whose influence is for evil rather than for good. If this is raised as an objection to the function of the Family as here represented, my answer is that however true the

contention may be it is irrelevant. To understand the purpose and meaning of an organism or institution we must take it in its completeness at any stage of development, and not in a degraded or mutilated form. The best institutions may easily become the most mischievous when they are perverted or mismanaged, but that does not affect their intrinsic value unless it can be shown to be inherent in their nature to be perverted or mismanaged. Nevertheless, although it is only incidental to the main purpose of this study, it will be interesting to touch very briefly upon some of the conditions under which the Family does seem to break down and to have its real purpose perverted.

Personal defects of character stand, of course, pre-eminent as causes militating against family life. Self-indulgence of all kinds, whether in drink or gambling or any form of greed, make a man difficult to live with in any kind of community, and more especially when he can exercise direct power over the lives of others. On the other hand, no influence is so strong to guard against the development of such defects as these as the Family itself, when it is allowed to have free play.

Of failure due to wider and more external influences we may note the following instances:—In the first place, we find the Family failing and perverted whenever the burden of maintaining it is transferred to any great extent from the strong members to the weak. It was so, for instance, in the early days of the factory system, when child



labour was much employed, though it is significant that even then it was the children of the Poor Law, the children without Families, who were the first and principal sufferers. It is so at the present day whenever we find the Family mainly dependent upon the earnings of women and girls. It seems to be almost inevitable that the man who accepts a subordinate economic position in the Family degenerates into a loafer and tyrant.

We find the Family weak again and perverted wherever there is an extensive reliance upon external sources of maintenance. It is as if the man in abdicating from his economic independence inflicts an injury upon his moral nature which poisons all his natural relations. For an illustration on a large scale we need only turn to the generation living in the early part of the nineteenth century, when under the influence of the old Poor Law family life suffered a terrible and widespread degeneration. For instances on a smaller scale the student may go to any town or district—fortunately they are not now very numerous—where men are in the habit of looking to external aid for maintenance rather than to their own exertions. There he will find without fail that family ties are weak, and that family rights and responsibilities are perverted into abuses. It is perhaps chiefly in the large towns that he will find this cause at work, owing partly to the greater number of charitable agencies and the greater difficulty of carrying on their work wisely, and partly to the greater ease of evading responsibilities in the busy

and crowded life. And it is to this evasion of the responsibility which is the strength of the Family that we mainly owe the degenerate family life which is characteristic of the worst, not necessarily the poorest, parts of our towns.

But there is, I think, another main reason why family life tends to degenerate in large towns. It is the habit of facile and superficial intercourse which grows up when people are hoarded together in very close quarters. Real interests, even outside interests, are not necessarily hostile to family life; indeed, they usually serve to enrich it unless of such a nature as to absorb all time and strength. They form an organic union between those who share in them, which is itself analogous to the Family; and intercourse based upon true interests deepens and sweetens the very springs of life. But this is something quite different from the intercourse which is based upon no common interest, but is the mere outcome of casual proximity. (I say casual proximity, because there may be an organic proximity, which is another thing altogether.) We are taught that we are to love our neighbour; we are also taught that our neighbour is not every man who happens to pass us in the street, but the man with whom we are able to establish real relations of sympathy and helpfulness. No genuine attempt can be made to establish these relations with all the casual acquaintances of town life, or if made it is doomed to failure. The very meaning of neighbourliness tends to disappear in proportion to the density of population and the habit of facile ac-

quaintanceship. Hence the paradox that human lives may be more unutterably lonely in the crowds of a town than is possible in the smallest village. Friendship is a plant which needs sedulous cultivation, and, with a practically infinite circle of acquaintances to draw upon, few people will be at the trouble to make friends; at the first breath of coolness, the first casual friction, they will turn to another, to repeat the process indefinitely. It is this habit which is hostile to family life as well as to friendship; we cannot live with members of our Family on terms of mere acquaintanceship, but mere acquaintanceship is much easier, and appears for the time at least to give us what we need at much less cost to ourselves.

It is in this way that we tend to get in our large towns a number of people, men and women, who have let slip their membership of a family group without raising themselves to anything higher. They have become disconnected atoms drifting through the life of the community, bound by no ties of duty or responsibility, seeking only the satisfaction of the moment, and often becoming incapable even of self-maintenance. If the production of a class like this were the inevitable outcome of city life, it would seem to be another proof, or at least another suggestion, that man is not naturally a gregarious animal, except to a very limited extent, and that he cannot become so in a high degree without deterioration to a level which is scarcely human. Fortunately such phases as we have been considering have so far proved to be temporary.



Always the Family has reasserted itself, at latest in the next generation, and always it has proved itself the means of restored independence and prosperity.

It has been impossible for me, with very limited resources of knowledge and experience to draw upon, to do more than suggest in its crudest outlines what the history of the Family has been in the past. It is a great work waiting for a great scholar. It has been perhaps still more impossible to show with any hope of adequacy what the Family is at any time, more especially at the present time, for the people who live beneath its sway. It may be that it is a theme fitter for the poet than for sober prose; for there is hardly a subject which poets have made peculiarly their own which does not find a place within the Family. It is greater than love itself, for it includes, ennobles, makes permanent all that is best in love. The pain of life is hallowed by it, the drudgery sweetened, its pleasures consecrated. It is the great trysting-place of the generations, where past and future flash into the reality of the present. It is the great storehouse in which the hardly earned treasures of the past, the inheritance of spirit and character from our ancestors, are guarded and preserved for our descendants. And it is the great discipline through which each generation learns anew the lesson of citizenship that no man can live for himself alone.

But when in writing of the Family one is baffled

by the magnitude of the theme, then the thought comes to one's aid that inadequacy need not mean failure. For, like all the greatest things in life, it lies open to all; it is a book where he who runs may read, and every one may supply from his own knowledge and experience what he misses in the picture offered to him. But it is one of the sad truisms of daily life that our eyes are wont to overlook the things which lie nearest to us, and some service may be done by one who can recall our wandering attention, however imperfectly, and if only by saying, "look there!"

There is danger, no doubt, lest an inadequate attempt to bring into fuller consciousness the reality and importance of so intimate a part of our lives should tend to make it appear commonplace. Against that must be set the very real risk that in our *unconsciousness* we may heedlessly endanger its very existence, or at least neglect to guard it as jealously as we might. If we are to prefer other institutions to it, to seek other methods of ordering our lives, it should at least be with the full realisation of what it is we are prepared to sacrifice. To some who watch the social movements and legislation of to-day, it seems that this choice is being made without a full and conscious deliberation, and that we are thus in danger of bartering the substance for the shadow.

It is clear, then, that this book has had nothing new to offer. It only calls attention to a great fact

which lies within the experience of every one, and attempts—how roughly and imperfectly no one knows better than the writer—to suggest what its significance is and has been in the great drama of humanity.

THE END

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